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New Statesman

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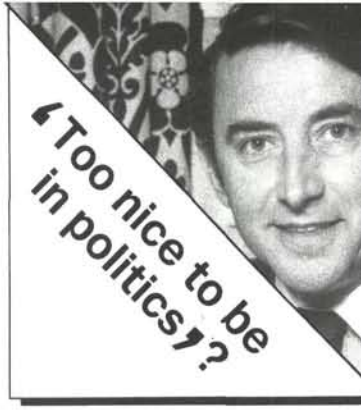


'Too nice to be in politics'?

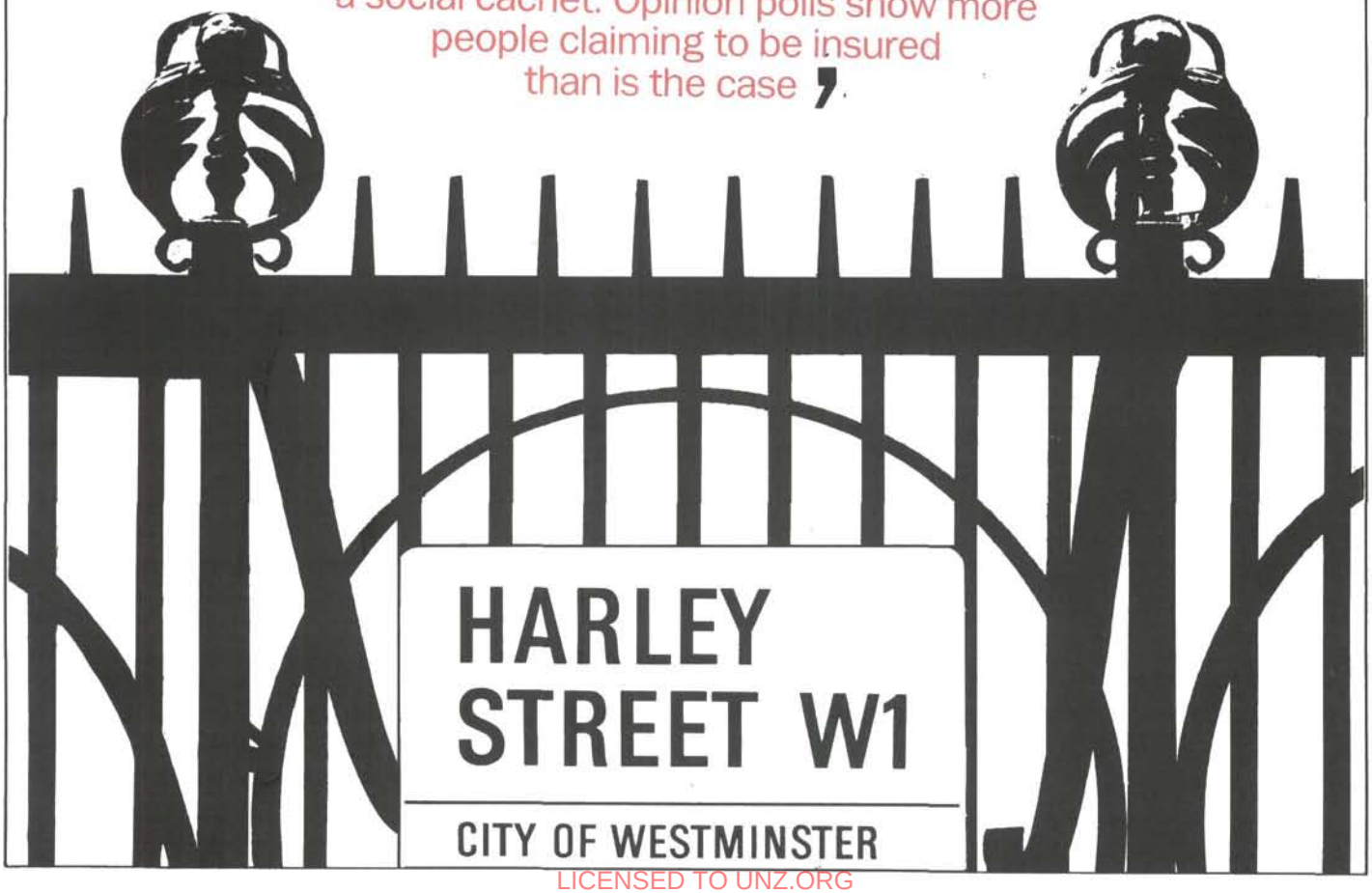
The right finds feminism, by Sarah Benton

Eurocommunism embraces social democracy; KGB goes freelance

Paul Muldoon: 1986 Prudence Farmer Poetry Award

THE WEALTH SERVICE

'Going private has acquired a social cachet. Opinion polls show more people claiming to be insured than is the case'.



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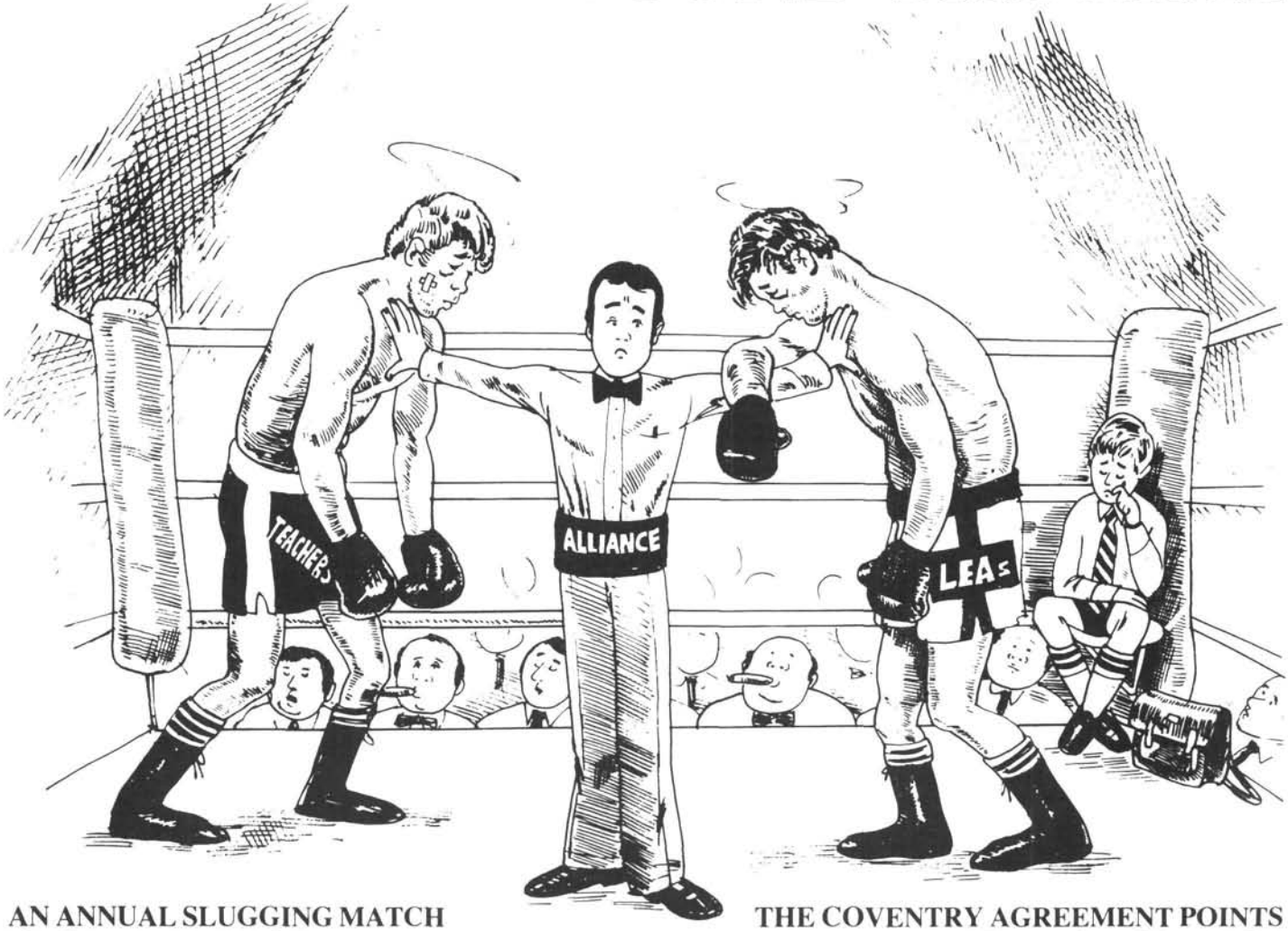
IT'S TIME TO SOUND THE BELL



AN ANNUAL SLUGGING MATCH IS NOT THE WAY TO SETTLE TEACHERS' PAY.

The NAS/UWT (representing 128,000 classroom teachers) is prepared to work towards creating the negotiating structure for a new and lasting consensus in education.

We agree that conflict must not remain endemic in industrial relations. There are no winners and our children are the losers.

But teachers' pay levels are 33% down on 12 years ago compared with the index of average earnings for non-manual workers.

THE COVENTRY AGREEMENT POINTS THE WAY TO A SOLUTION — BUT IT HAS OBVIOUS FLAWS.

It represents a unique opportunity to restructure education; combining quality, value for money and a new alliance benefiting pupils, parents and teachers.

In future rounds of negotiations, the Coventry agreement must be developed to define teachers' duties fairly and to give teachers a salary reflecting their value to society. As it stands it does neither.

The employers seek a formal system for teacher appraisal plus a tighter and more demanding contract. But there must be a price-tag attached to each.

THE NAS/UWT WILL NOT RUN AWAY FROM A FIGHT BUT BELIEVE IT IS TIME TO SOUND THE BELL TO STOP CLASSROOM CONFLICT.

NAS/UWT
The Career Teachers' Organisation

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New Statesman
Vol 112 No 2895 19 September 1986

The Robin Hood test of radicalism

THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS' well advertised floundering over tax policy shouldn't give any joy to the left. It has brought into the open the urgent need for a redistribution of wealth from rich to poor which must be at the centre of *any* future policy. The SDP has published detailed plans before the Labour Party. Labour should have been the first to do so, but remains reluctant to put figures to its proposals (which are still being worked out).

What has been obscured, however, is that much of the SDP's platform is *already* Labour Party policy, and is certain to be reaffirmed when the National Executive's statement on 'social security and taxation' goes to Labour's conference at Blackpool later this month. Second, the SDP policies are a good deal less radical than they have been billed, certainly less than would be required for a far-reaching redistributive programme.

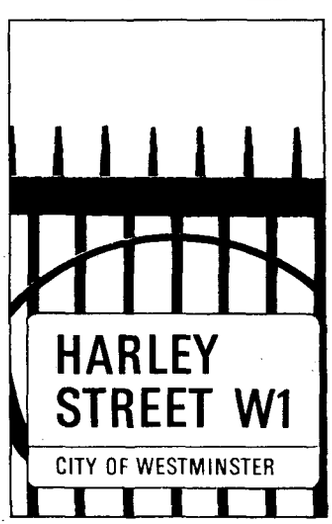
When it comes to clobbering the rich the SDP shies away. It proposes to 'phase in' the scrapping of extra mortgage tax relief for people who pay higher-rate income tax (individuals earning at least £20,000 a year), and the extension of National Insurance contributions to earnings between £14,820 and £20,000. It proposes to leave higher income tax rates as they are, 'so that there will be no adverse effect on incentives'. Labour will do *both* straight away and put higher national insurance contributions on higher-rate income, as well as 'substantial' unearned income.

Frank Field, Labour's long-term anti-poverty campaigner and maverick, has criticised the SDP proposals for considerable imprecision in their claims that they would be 'broadly self-financing' and that no extra public borrowing would be required to finance better benefits. Not so, says Field — and the realisation that that was so led David Steel to call for a fresh look at policy 'presentation'. But Field is also fiercely critical of Labour for proposing no more than the SDP in the necessary reshaping of the welfare state which must accompany radical reform.

The SDP's drawing of fire may now allow Labour to poke its head out from behind the rock. Until it does, Conservative Central Office will have a field day in alleging that Roy Hattersley means to slap extra tax on everyone on or above average earnings, which it has defined as around £10,000. Actually the median for men and women is £8,800 (i.e., half of full-time employees earn more than this): £10,000 is the median full-time *male* earnings. Only some 10 per cent of employees earns £15,600 or more — though the average income for *households*, including benefits, is £13,750. The quicker the proposals are out in the open, the sooner the allegation that *most* people will be worse off unless our present rich-flavouring tax structure is reformed will continue to flourish.

• Statistical footnote. If £1m were declared the maximum personal wealth permitted for any individual, and all the surplus above that figure were confiscated from Britain's 20,000 (in 1986) millionaires and multi-millionaires, it would come to £30bn — enough to pay for Labour's anti-poverty programme for ten years. Ask yourself: would that increase or decrease the amount of human freedom in our society? □

New Statesman



Cover photo: Laurie Sparham/ Network

Wealth Service JOLYON JENKINS on the rise of health as consumer good 5

FEATURES

Peter Kellner: Owen ditches the Gang of Four 9
John Lloyd: David Steel — the boy scout puts on weight 10
Tony Benn: Time to go non-aligned? 12
Andy McSmith: Gorbachev's problems 15
Donald Sassoon: Euro-left-fest in Turin 16
Irene Ertugrul: Palestinians under Israeli occupation 17
Amos Peter Gelb: China's press 19
Charles Leadbeater: US deficits 20
Ian Williams: More rusty byways 21

ARTS

John Spurling: Picasso's sketchbooks 22
Peter Hillmore: Television 23
Adam Mars-Jones: Special effects and the cinema 23
Paul Allen: Dario Fo at the Bristol Old Vic 24
Andrew Clements: Music festivals in Finland and Sweden 25
Naseem Khan: Work in progress on an experiment in women's experimental theatre 26

BOOKS

Paul Muldoon: 1986 Prudence Farmer Poetry Prize 27
Nigel Fountain: Dave Caute 28
Alison Hennegan: Elizabeth Wilson 28
Jeanette Winterson: Kingsley Amis 29
Alison Fell: Cecilie Løveid 30
Nick Kimberley: Konrad Bayer 30
Alan Brien: Paperbacks 31

BACKCHAT

Colin Spencer: Do-it-yourself recipes 36
Marek Kohn: Mad about the Underground 37
Weekend competition 38
John Minnion 39
George Botterill: Chess 39
This England 39

PLUS

Roger Woddis 12
Diary: 'Ratel' 18
Letters 32

NEXT WEEK

48-page issue

THE LABOUR PARTY

On the eve of Conference — how is it 'preparing for power'? JOHN RENTOUL reports

NUCLEAR RETREAT

The retreat from nuclear power is turning into a rush. ROB EDWARDS reports on Britain and the world

PLUS

BUMPER BOOKS ISSUE: autumn books list, South African literature, David Edgar, Josephine Saxton and much, much, more . . .

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Will Rumbold gag?

No sooner in office than she may have to eat her words, writes Andrew Lumsden. Events are moving fast as we go to press, but it *looks* as if the government's education ministers will stick to their original line of opposing the Tory rebels who want a parental right to hoik kids out of sex education. That would (a) ensure a pleasing row at Tory conference next month, and (b) mean newly-promoted junior education minister Angela Rumbold, one of Thatcher's reshuffle sops to the right-wing, having to grin and bear a break with her cronies. Or resign.

'I'm not against sex education in schools' said her chief, Kenneth Baker, on BBC's *World at One* this Tuesday (16 Sept). And 'I accept that the subject of homosexuality does and will come up'. All of which sounds as if he doesn't intend despite media speculation to rat on his just-departed junior Chris Patten's determined resistance to the 'parental opt-out' rebels led by egregious backbench self-publicist Peter Bruinvels. The whole teaching establishment and internal DES advice is against the 'opt-out' amendment to the Education Bill backed by some 90 Tories and set to come up for debate on 21 October.

Labour's agin the opt-out too, now. On Monday shadow education secretary Giles Radice said Labour's previous support had been a tactical manoeuvre which had served its turn and which he's now recommending against (*NS* 12 Sept and letters this issue). So if Baker holds the line the rebels are likely to lose, and the Bill to go forward for the Royal Assent before the start of the new Parliamentary session on 12 November. Tories will still have got away with their other loaded clause ordering respect for 'family values' in sex education, but the right wing is terrified that 'lefty' education authorities and teachers who are themselves homosexual will ignore the implicit pro-Christian fundamentalist propaganda demand in the clause. As they should.

Reading the Tory runes at the height of one of their internal rows isn't easy, but another straw in the wind suggesting Baker will resist Bruinvels lies in the the reason why Baker went on *World at One* in the first place. It was to attack the Gay Men's Press book *Jenny Lives with Eric and Martin*, an originally Scandinavian teaching-aid about homosexuality, telling with illustrations the tale of a little girl living with her father and his male lover. 'Blatant homosexual propaganda', said Baker, who is calling on educational authorities, and specifically on Inner London Education Authority (ILEA), to ban it. Published three years ago (the 3,000 print-run has pretty well sold out) it was attacked by the *Sun* with a wealth of inaccuracy on 6 May two days before the ILEA elections. So this week's Baker outburst is literally *Sun*-style — but gross enough to gain him Downing Street-cred; and possibly to be interpreted as his way of declaiming that his heart's in the right place even if he does oppose the 'opt-out'.

Meantime, Radice wants a person-to-person talk about the 'opt-out' row with Baker. And an encouraging development, in line with *NS*'s urgings last week that sex education should pivot round the history curriculum. In this instance it's gender education: starting 3 November BBC School TV is to broadcast a five-part anti-sexist series called *Equal People* aimed at 14-16 year-olds and addressing, with historical instances, the role and images, including self-images, of girls and women. ■

Old Harrovians

Is junior minister-to-be Michael Portillo an old Harrovian? He was so described in last Wednesday's Daily Mail, *thus rousing the ire of Diane Abbott, Labour candidate for Hackney North. If he is an old Harrovian, so am I, she says.*

How so? Well, Portillo went to Harrow County Grammar School for Boys: Abbott to the Harrow County Grammar School for Girls.

One can't accuse Portillo of himself perpetrating this piece of social climbing: Who's Who, *which relies on the great and good's own descriptions of themselves for its potted biographies, lists the true state of affairs. But Portillo does not mention his Thespian skills. He and Abbott shared membership of the joint sixth form drama society, and even played in the same production of T. S. Eliot's* Murder in the Cathedral. *Fittingly, thinks Abbott, Portillo played an assassin knight, Abbott a peasant in the chorus.* ■

Independent territory

The launch of The Independent *on 7 October is causing a moderate panic across at the* Guardian. Guardian *editor Peter Preston fears it might live up to its name: one explanation for the rash of TV commercials and posters showing that the* Guardian *is independent of any Mr Big pulling its strings.*

But propaganda is not thought enough. Preston recently instructed his political writers to concentrate less on the Labour Party, and to write more on the Alliance parties. The Independent, *it's thought, might scoop up the people in the middle ground of politics who see the country's leading left of centre paper as a pawn moved about the board by Neil Kinnock. Kinnock's people already think the* Guardian *is in the SDP camp. The middle looks like it will see some territorial disputes.*

So does the parliamentary lobby. Anthony Bevins, The Independent*'s political editor (late of* The Times*) will celebrate his new beginnings by refusing to obey the rules of the lobby, or attend its briefings: he is threatening the unthinkable, to pick up the results of Bernard Ingham's No 10 briefings and attribute them to him. As we go to*

press, the Guardian *political staff are due to discuss with Preston whether or not to follow suit. Preston has in the past been hostile to the lobby system: but Jim Naughtie, the paper's sharp and omnivorous political editor, is uncertain. Like many political correspondents, he believes the power of the lobby briefing for good or ill is overstressed; that off-the-record briefings will be given under other auspices if they were abolished; and that good reporters use the briefings as a minor part of a story's input.*

Maybe so. But why did most of the papers, Guardian *included, give pride of coverage in last week's reshuffle to Edwina Currie's move to health and social security — downplaying the robust Angela Rumbold's translation to education to mop up the drips from Kenneth Baker? Was this not the agenda as set by Ingham?* ■

Mutinies over Mutineer

The row over the accuracy of the BBC's current Sunday night series, *The Monocled Mutineer*, is born of right-wing malice out of BBC bungling, writes Denis Campbell. Julian Putkowski, historical adviser to the series, told the *NS* this week that neither he nor Alan Bleasdale, the scriptwriter, ever believed the 'Mutineer' was anything other than a 'cracking good yarn': he has disclaimed all responsibility for the factual errors in the series, says the BBC ignored his advice about 'major historical inaccuracies' and did not consult him about the final version of the script until it had been filmed.

Advance BBC publicity gave the impression that here was a sensational slice of hidden history; an article in the *Radio Times*, for example, said *The Monocled Mutineer* was 'adapted from a true story about a British army mutiny led by a dashing rogue'. Even BBC Governor Alwyn Roberts said the advertisements were 'a bit racy — not really what I'd expect as an introduction to a sober historical story'. Says Putkowski: 'The series isn't fact and the BBC shouldn't have billed it as such'.

But this opened up the field for a right-wing in the Tory backbenches and the press which wants to see the BBC brought to book by a new chairman (to replace the late Stuart Young) who will not go native as Young did. Lord King, chairman of British Airways and the right's favoured candidate, has let it be known he won't go: the right may not now get the censor it evidently wants.

Meanwhile, *The Monocled Mutineer* continues to be one of the best things on television. It ends on Sunday night. ■

Paradise postponed . . . again

Mrs Thatcher's favourite economist is Professor Patrick Minford of Liverpool University, not least because he constantly predicts that government policies will have a miraculous effect . . . in about three years time.

This week Minford has published his latest forecast. For the first time he says unemployment will stay above 3 million in 1988 — the latest date for the next general election. For the record, this is how Minford's unemployment forecasts have evolved since 1983: ■

	Unemployment forecast for . . .			
Date of forecast	**1986 m**	**1987 m**	**1988 m**	**1989 m**
Dec '83	1.9	1.6	na	na
Oct '84	2.4	2.2	1.9	na
Sep '85	3.1	3.0	2.8	2.5
Sep '86	3.2	3.2	3.1	2.9

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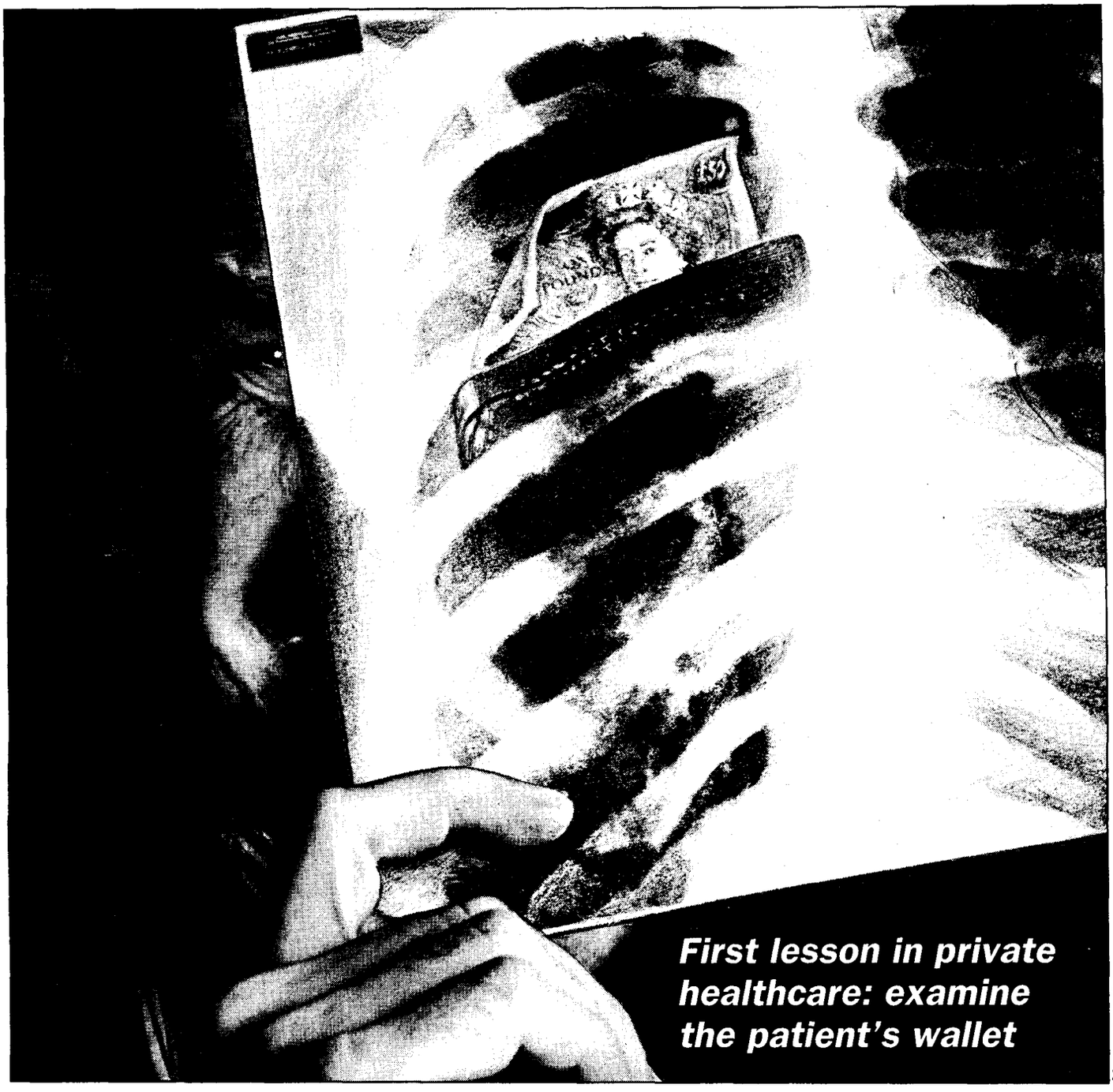

First lesson in private healthcare: examine the patient's wallet

Montage: Leon Kuhn

HEALTH OFF THE SHELF

Mrs Thatcher told us we could entrust the NHS to her hands — but she didn't entrust her hand to it. A tenth of the population now follow her example and go private. JOLYON JENKINS reports on the rise of health as a consumer good

NOT MANY National Health Service casualty wards have Elgar's *Enigma Variations* playing softly in the waiting room, or soft chairs and potted plants for decor. Medical Express does. Off Oxford Street, it's the country's first 'walk in, no wait' casualty clinic — and it's private. Londoners who drop a typewriter on their foot now take taxis there in preference to their local NHS hospital. Why? The clinic has no beds, only deals with minor ailments, and costs £35 a session. Its facilities are hardly lavish — they resemble what one might hope to find in a small up-and-coming Third World hospital. The secret is that, however trivial the complaint, customers are seen straightway by a *consultant*. Such is the apparent snob value of the service that 50 people a day are prepared to pay for it. The clinic do you a screening for £85, and give a computer printout on the state of your health,

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'Vested interests'

IN NO AREA has government ideology caused so much anguish for so little reward as in the privatisation of NHS services. The DHSS estimates that £9.4 million has been saved — just over one per cent of the entire health budget.

Sometimes the money has explicitly been made secondary to the ideology. In 1983 the DHSS told North Yorkshire Health Authority that ministers wished it to opt for a private laundry service even though an appraisal had shown it to be more expensive than the in-house service. The difference, said the DHSS, was 'well within the range of error which it was reasonable to assume with appraisals of this kind'.

In any case, the big money was elsewhere. In 1983, two health administrators pointed out to Norman Fowler that really large sums would be available if the DHSS sold off its hospital accommodation. The sale of 73,000 of its 112,000 units would raise nearly £750 million; more realistically, selling off-site housing would raise £170 million. In 1985 Fowler told health authorities to start selling.

The two moves have combined into a pincer effect on the most vulnerable of all the NHS staff — the domestics. Mainly women, many of them from overseas, they are in a double bind. If the work they do becomes privatised then even if they keep their jobs, some of them stand to lose their NHS homes. But if the in-house teams win the contracts they could still be evicted when their accommodation is sold off. The government has — under pressure — said no one will be made homeless; but people may still be shunted from place to place.

At St Mary's, Paddington, six domestics who used to work for the NHS before privatisation were threatened with eviction from their NHS accommodation and had their keys confiscated. Luckily their plight received some press coverage, and a meeting of the District Health Authority last Wednesday decided to suspend the eviction notices. But it seems that they will have to go eventually.

Not surprisingly, staff at other hospitals where privatisation hasn't yet gone very far are jittery. Barts is seeking to shed 70 of its 200 domestics through voluntary redundancies so that it can win the contract against operators Exclusive. 'Privatisation always affects morale, people don't know what to do next — it's a very unsatisfactory situation', says Maurice Collander, a NUPE shop steward at Barts.

'Cleaning standards are pretty good now', says one domestic, 'but they can't be kept up if this happens. If you decide to stay you will still lose at the end of the day when they start to pressure you. But if you decide to go there is nothing for you in the way of a job.' ●

which is yours to keep and take home with you.

Medical Express doesn't just deal with very rich Londoners and foreign visitors. While I was there, an office worker in her twenties came in because she had a mysterious rash on her hand. She didn't *look* as if she could afford £35, but the advantages of the clinic being near her workplace and not having to wait obviously outweighed the cost. According to managing director Fredericka Bower, their most effective advertising slots have been in the *Standard*, London's aggressively middlebrow evening paper. The clinic is the only one of its kind at the moment, and is only just starting to attract enough customers to make money. *But it could epitomise the future of private medicine in Britain.*

One reason is economic: the private hospital sector is stagnating, and many of the professionals are starting to get alarmed. The number of acute private beds (beds in private hospitals which have operating theatres) is hardly increasing at all; although up slightly on last year's figures, it is down 1 per cent on 1984's. Although new hospitals *are* being planned and built, it is generally accepted that there are already too many empty beds (particularly in London and Birmingham, where most of the new development is taking place), and the predictable result will be hospital closures.

Within this picture, one Victorian Value is swallowing up another: Charity is giving way to Profit. British charitable institutions are beginning to suffer under the commercial transatlantic onslaught. In 1979, charitable and religious hospitals constituted 71 per cent of the private sector (in terms of acute beds); this year they made up just under half. The for-profit sector has correspondingly increased from 29 per cent to just over half. And within the for-profit sector, American chains have increased their market share from 2 per cent to 22 per cent.

Dying privately

The one area where there has been sustainable growth is in the private nursing and residential homes market. According to William Laing, a consultant with Laing and Buissant, and an authority in the field, 'it seems likely that the private sector will overtake the public by 1990'.

Laing identifies two causes for the increase. First, supplementary benefit rules were changed in 1981 so that (up to certain limits), the DHSS will pay for private places in homes. Second, there has been a demographic change, with more old people around, especially the very old. An increasing number own now-valuable houses which they can sell to pay for a place in a private home, in order to die privately. (About two-thirds still pay for themselves.)

The Americans started moving into the British private health market in the early 80s, encouraged by wildly optimistic forecasts (made by, among others, the then health minister, Gerard Vaughan), that the private sector could soon account for a quarter of the population. This hasn't happened: about 9 per cent of British people are now covered by some form of insurance (General Household Survey) — this figure appears static and the number who opt for the 'pay as you go' system is small and decreasing. Profits aren't nearly as high as had been hoped.

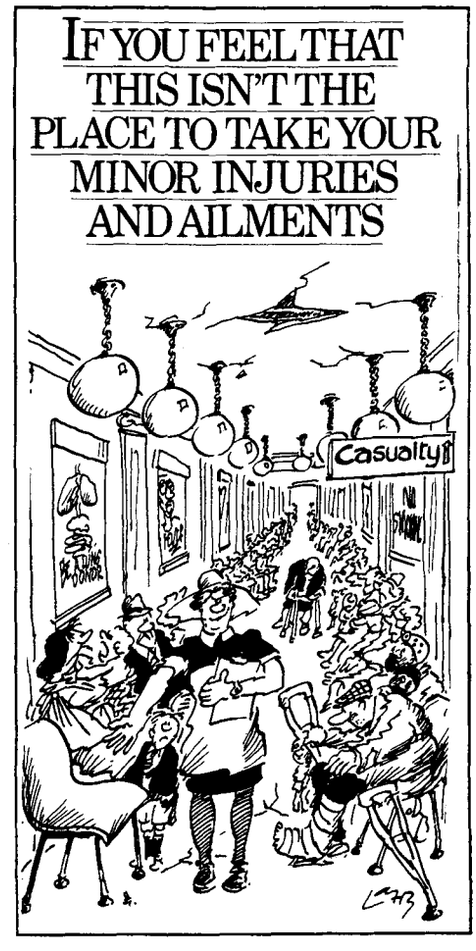
There are at least three reasons for this: medical inflation, as every NHS lobbyist knows, has far outstripped general inflation; and it has proved much more expensive to insure non-professionals than anyone realised. BUPA, for example, discovered too late that police officers, despite being mainly active young white men, suffer badly from stress and hypochondria (usually one would expect this to be a low stress group), and in Thatcher's Britain it's more acceptable to keep on claiming. Finally, despite the insurers begging the providers to cut down on unnecessary treatment, it's still more profitable for the consultants to keep piling it on. Apart from entreaties there's almost nothing the insurers can do, except to reduce the amount of cover their policies give. And in some areas the whole raison d'etre of private health is going by the board, as private queues are *longer* than those in the NHS.

(There is also the entertaining sight of the provident associations and charitable institutions complaining that the Americans are 'creaming the market': an astounding stealing of clothes, considering that supporters of the NHS have been always accusing the entire private sector of doing just this.

Everyone's nightmare (except perhaps the consultants') is America, where the market has conspicuously failed to behave itself: the US spends around $1,500 a year per head on health care (*Economist* estimate, April 1984), nearly four times what Britain spends, but its people are no healthier. Some operators in the States have been forced to go for higher-profit areas, such as health screening and 'fitness assessment' which don't require such highly skilled staff or capital outlay. The same trend seems to be occurring here. Apart from outfits like Medical Express, BUPA now has 14 'medical centres' around the country.

Social cachet

That's why the private sector is in some trouble. But why did it expand in the first



Right: Medical Express literature capitalises on anxieties about the NHS

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place? The operators themselves enjoy pointing to Barbara Castle's 1976 Health Service Act which effectively struck a bargain with the consultants: they could carry on with private practice if pay beds in NHS hospitals were phased out. The consequent reduction in pay beds — in the end it turned out to be rather small — gave the private sector the impetus to expand its own facilities. Then the incoming Conservative government changed consultants' employment conditions in two significant ways. Part-time NHS posts become better rewarded, and therefore more attractive. Second, full-time NHS consultants were allowed to carry out private work, and earn up to 10 per cent of their gross full-time earnings — and it was understood that no one would check up on whether this limit was being exceeded.

Less tangibly, there seems to have been a shift in the acceptability of private medicine, typified by EETPU under Frank Chapple successfully negotiating BUPA membership for 32,000 of its members in the electrical contracting industry in 1981. Chapple was clearly more in touch with his members than the trade unionists who cried foul. No other unions have negotiated national agreements, but that hasn't stopped the trend. ASTMS, (Association of Scientific, Technical and Managerial Staff) has a rigorous anti-BUPA policy. Nonetheless, some local branches have ignored national policy and gone ahead and negotiated local agreements.

ASTMS's difficulty is that the trend has been for large companies to provide insurance for nearly all employees, not just senior management, and so some of its members may be insured whether they want to be or not. The growth in membership of insurance schemes which occurred in the last few years has been mainly among 'C1' workers ('lower middle class', junior white collar workers.) In 1981, 15 per cent said they were insured (Mintel, November 1981); by 1984 the figure was 24 per cent (Mintel, November 1984), within haling distance of the 30 per cent for As and Bs.

'Going private,' *does* seem to have acquired a certain social cachet. Intriguingly, opinion polls consistently show more people claiming to be insured than is the case. Mintel's 1981 survey showed that two of the reasons for choosing private treatment were because it had a higher social status, and because of a belief that the treatment would be better, although the industry never makes this claim.

Another reason, of course, is that the NHS has remained underfunded. And quite apart from the damage in morale which a thriving private sector does to the NHS, there are more directly damaging effects. DHSS has been scandalously lax about collecting bills from users of NHS paybeds. ('Serious and persistent failures' the Comptroller and Auditor General said he'd discovered last year.) According to Labour health spokesman Frank Dobson: 'The Bloomsbury Health Authority closed down both University College and Middlesex Hospital to all but emergency admissions last year because it hadn't enough money to keep going. The shortfall was less than the private patients' debts.'

Some NHS managers also fear that the government might decide to take private facilities into account in the annual RAWP (Resources Allocation Working Party) calculations which are intended to redistribute funds around the country to where they are most needed. The South East has already been dramatically 'RAWPed', and with more than half of all private acute beds within 50 miles of London, altering the rules like this could hurt inner city Londoners badly.

Author's health profile: low body fat, but why are the thighs different sizes?

HEALTHCHECK SUMMARY

NAME: Jolyon Jenkins — DATE: 29-08-1986

PARAMETER		RESULT
HEIGHT		175.6 cm
WEIGHT		63.60 kg
BODY FAT PERCENTAGE		13.23 %
FAT FREE MASS		55.19 kg
BODY GIRTHS	- CHEST	83.0 cm
	- ABDOMEN	77.0 cm
	- WAIST	72.0 cm
LIMB GIRTHS	- RIGHT BICEP	27.5 cm
	- LEFT BICEP	23.5 cm
	- RIGHT THIGH	51.0 cm
	- LEFT THIGH	49.00 cm
LUNG FUNCTION	- F.V.C.	5.85 l
	- F.E.V. 1%	90.26 %
	- PEAK FLOW RATE	400.00 l/min

Alternative health

Just as important as the economic factors is the de facto privatisation of health that has taken place. Health has become just one more commodity that can be purchased by those that can afford it and attach importance to it. It's not just health insurance and private hospitals: the proliferation of health food shops and health clubs, and sales of 'alternative' health products, bicycles, and sun lamps are all part of the same trend. One report (Keynote, 1984) estimates that as a nation we now spend £3 billion a year from our own pockets on making ourselves healthier.

But we have to be careful about this. (We still spend £8 billion a year on cigarettes, for example.) Much of the 'health boom' was always just a media myth. Health clubs don't always last very long, and some people have ended up losing millions of pounds trying to supply the mythical demand. Martin Stock, secretary of one of London's longer established 'serious' clubs, Ravelles, isn't exaggerating greatly when he says he hears of another club closing down every week. While he does detect a slow, long-term growth of interest in 'serious' health, it's nothing like what has occurred in America and Canada. 'It's always because there's a craze for something', he says: '15 years ago it was Kung Fu; in 1984 it was aerobics; now it's for sports *clothes* and shoes, which people buy because they're fashionable, not because they're healthy.' Significantly, the boom in health *magazines* hasn't been reversed. 'People still prefer reading and thinking about being healthy to doing anything about it.'

All the same, it's fair to see buying a health magazine which tells you that you ought to be doing more exercise as being on a continuum

A doctor speaks

DOCTOR X does private practice. He was introduced to me by Doctor Y, who doesn't, for moral/political reasons. They're both consultants at one of London's major teaching hospitals. I was after someone who wouldn't give me the facile line I'd got from BUPA. ('You may say it's queue jumping, but I say it's like waiting for a bus and then taking a taxi if one comes along first.') Doctor Y said I wouldn't find a consultant who actually felt *guilty* about doing private work, but that Doctor X (unlike, he implied, certain other colleagues) had a sincere commitment to the Health Service even though he had a Harley Street practice too. I asked Dr. X to justify himself.

'There are two reasons why I do it. One is to earn more money. The other reason is to have a sense of some independence. One never quite knows what's going to happen in the NHS and it's nice to have a second string to my bow.

'I'd never do it full time: I grew up with a commitment to the Health Service. And British medicine is so arranged that all important teaching and academic activities are geared up to the NHS. In full-time private practice one would lose an awful lot of clinical and academic opportunities. Most of us in part-time private practice are strongly committed to seeing a successful Health Service.

'Things could only really change if a large private sector built up which was able to provide equivalent facilities to the Health Service, and which began to have an academic and training part to it — which became as *respectable*. Most of us feel that even though we do private work, it's not entirely respectable.

'And I think we all have a great fear, as many professionals do, of a salaried service. It's as much to do with a desire for independence as for the money.

'There is, I accept, an ethical dilemma involved. Private practice *does*, I believe, make more health care available. But its distribution is dependent on people's ability to pay and there *is* an moral problem there. On the other hand, I think that it is possible for *individuals* to be committed to the Health Service and do private practice: I would consider myself primarily committed to the Health Service. There is a dilemma, but it applies in so many areas of life: that is the way things are.

'It remains to be demonstrated how much harm, if any, the private sector actually does to the NHS. And there is potential for it to do it some good. If I see a private patient here at this hospital, which I'm allowed to do, I pay the hospital £7. That is more than I pay in rent at Harley Street. This hospital could be earning a great deal of money that way. Similarly, inpatients in private hospitals can be paying £1,000 a week just for accommodation and nursing. They — or their insurance companies — *could* be paying that to an NHS hospital.

'In any case, the Health Service actually gets out of me an enormous excess over their contract. My experience is that none of us clockwatches. I come into work at 8 am and leave at 6 pm, and then do a great deal of work in the evenings and the weekends *for the hospital*. So the NHS actually gets a bargain out of its part-timers because they work almost full-time before they go on to private practice.' ●

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with paying £85 to have your fitness assessed by Medical Express. (They did mine for me as a journalistic freebie; the result seemed to be somewhere between 'not bad' and 'really not bad at all'. I was reminded of the virtues of wholemeal bread, exercise and not too much alcohol.)

While there's still a National Health Service to look after the nuts and bolts of health, the market will find it too expensive to expand much. And that's why the future of private medicine could be epitomised by Medical Express. The trend could be for a 'consumerist' health system where those with money walk in off the street and buy it anonymously and off the shelf. Fredericka Bower of Medical Express argues that people now apply straightforward consumerist principles to health, which is why giving people a computer printout of their fitness is such a success: 'Getting a screening here is exactly the same as getting your car MoT-ed. If you have a screening, you want to know what the result is. You don't want to be told: "the results will be sent to your GP."' She then dropped into the conversation the sentence: 'In some ways we're like what in America they call Health Maintenance Organisations.'

Right-wing reveries

HMOs: the new wonder organisations which send some of the new right here into delirium. (Originally, the story goes, these bodies were to be called Health *Management* Organisations, but the name was changed at the very last moment because those who were backing the proposed new organisation, became worried that the Nixon administration would be unhappy about the idea of involving *managers* in health care.)

In their purest form, HMOs encapsulate the old dictum (sometimes said to have prevailed in ancient China) that it makes more sense to pay your doctor to keep you healthy than to cure you when you are sick. You pay the HMO so much a year per head, and that then covers *all* your health needs. It differs from insurance in that the people you are paying are the ones who actually provide the treatment, right through from GP to operating theatre. (BUPA, for example, employs no GPs, and its hospitals are quite separate from its insurance business. An HMO would employ the whole lot, possibly on a profit-sharing basis.) There's an incentive, therefore, for the doctors not to over-prescribe or over-refer, otherwise their colleagues will start to get alarmed as they see their salaries being frittered away. Equally, there's an incentive to provide adequate health care, otherwise patients will go to a better HMO, etc etc — the accounts of the marvels of HMOs are often long on starry-eyed reverence for the Market.

The evidence from America is that HMOs do reduce direct costs by around 25 per cent, though there are other external costs which are difficult to quantify. There is also evidence that some of them discharge their patients before they are properly well, a deficiency that the Market has so far failed to correct. Also, American HMOs have had the luxury of being able to choose their patients and have, not surprisingly, gone for the fit and young. It would be a different matter if they had to accept the old and chronically ill.

The right here sometimes see HMOs as the way in which the NHS ought to develop/be replaced. It's often said that the NHS in any case resembles a giant HMO. One method would be to introduce vouchers — along the lines so beloved of deregulators of the state sector — which you could then trade with GPs, hospitals or HMOs of your choice, and which you could top up from your own pocket. Mrs Thatcher is thought to approve of the idea but Kenneth Clarke has described it as 'somewhat dotty'.

A somewhat less ambitious plan has been proposed by Alain Enthoven, a professor at Stanford University, California, and a guru of the right. He suggests turning District Health Authorities into HMOs, thus creating an internal market in the NHS: 'Each DHA would be given responsibility for comprehensive care for its people — plus a budget . . . to provide care or else buy care from other districts at negotiated prices . . . a "centre of excellence" would be rewarded. Patients it attracted would bring revenue with them. Each district management might no longer feel it was attempting to satisfy limitless demand, a feeling that must be quite discouraging.' (*Economist* 22 June 1985).

It must also be quite discouraging to Enthoven to see how deaf are the ears on which his proposals have fallen. Mrs Thatcher is said to be enthusiastic about HMOs, but if so it doesn't really show in the DHSS Green Paper, *Primary Health Care*, published in April, which proposes greater incentives for efficiency, but barely touches on Enthoven-type ideas.

The paper also suggests removing some of the statutory restrictions on who can provide health care, which 'may open the way to new schemes under which more than one service is provided under the same roof — such as health care "shops".' In other words, the private sector can do it if it wants but we're not going to.

IF THE FACT that we start from here means that the NHS is unlikely to privatise itself in the manner of HMOs, then a trend which the private operators might find appealing is to sell their services to the NHS. According to professor Alan Maynard, director of York University's Centre for Health Economics: 'If private provision is cheaper and of equal quality to that offered by the NHS, it is possible to conceive of an NHS District Health Authority which finances most care but provides none of it.' This already happens to some extent. BUPA has bought some expensive hi-tech equipment which NHS patients use, and some NHS patients have been treated in private hospitals.

But NHS lobbyists have condemned the purchase of hi-tech private sector facilities as an inappropriate use of public money. And there is little reason to suppose that the private sector *can* provide more efficient health care. The result of privatising the easy bits of the NHS like cleaning and catering has been exploited workers (see box) and in some cases an undeniably worse service. Alan Maynard disposes of the argument that competition will increase efficiency: 'The history of health care throughout the western world is that competition has never and probably never will exist.'

If we stand back from the theorising, then the realities are that: *The private sector is here to stay, even under a Labour government. If left to its own devices it will have to find new ways to expand, and an increased emphasis on 'consumerist' health could be one of them. Under the Tories, it will also encroach more and more on the NHS by selling its services to the state sector, while the latter will remain underfunded but not greatly changed.* □

Motes and Beams

THE PRIVATE sector creates a two-tier health system in an obvious and ostentatious way; but in the egalitarian stakes the NHS itself is far from perfect. According to a statistical analysis of data from the General Household Survey, carried out by Julian Le Grand of the London School of Economics, (*Economica* May 1978) professional workers secure 40 per cent more NHS money for themselves then manual workers. (This was based on a comparison of how often people said they had been ill, with how often they said they had had treatment.) This could well be an underestimate since once in hospital, the middle classes are adept at channeling resources their way —.as every nurse knows. It's impossible to repeat the analysis, since more recent General Household Surveys no longer ask the same questions. But according to Le Grand, the situation is unlikely to have improved: 'If anything, it's probably got worse', he says.

Some doubt has been cast on Le Grand's findings by Rudolf Klein and Elizabeth Collins of Bath University. Their analysis of the 1977 and 1978 General Household Survey (which asked slightly different questions) showed the working-classes going to their doctor (there was no analysis relating to hospital treatment) *more* per illness than the middle-classes. All the same:

- Working-class *women* still did badly.
- There was a consistent bias in favour of *healthy middle-class men*, who used their doctors heavily for preventative medicine. (This obviously corroborates the experience of the private sector.)
- The apparent discrepancy between the two sets of findings is largely accounted for by the fact the second survey only analysed each patient's *first* visit to the doctor, whereas many working-class patients only go to their doctors *once* per illness (often to get sickness certificates rather than treatment).

Other data tells the same story: a 1973 study by the Scottish Home and Health Department showed that when the middle-classes went to their doctors their consultations lasted 6.1 minutes, while the working-classes got only 4.2 minutes. And the hard statistics of (e.g.) perinatal mortality prove that the working-classes certainly end up less healthy.

Why the gap? Obvious things: it's harder to make an appointment with a doctor if you can't phone from work, or take time off during the day, or if there are fewer doctors in your area (true for the working-classes). And, says Le Grand: 'Individuals from working class socio-economic groups may well regard the Health Service — staffed as it is largely with middle-class personnel — as at best unhelpful and at worst actively hostile to their interests.' ●

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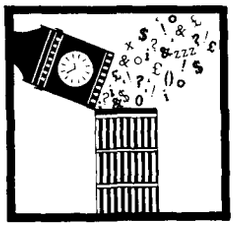

Dear Roy, Bill and Shirley: Get lost, yours David

THE PUBLIC face of the SDP wears a confused expression. Looked at from one side, and it is a party groping for an identity it can call its own; looked at from the other, it is a staging post on the way to a merger with the Liberals.

For the time being most delegates at Harrogate this week have been happy to show both expressions at once. Except during the most contentious debates, I felt we were discussing variants on a single motion, which went something like this:

> This council reaffirms existing SDP policy and endorses the decisions reached after discussions with the Liberals to develop a common Alliance approach to this issue.
>
> Council opposes any attempt to devise a platform based on fudge-and-mudge, and welcomes the constructive approach taken by the joint SDP-Liberal policy committee in a spirit of give-and-take.
>
> Council recognises the need to reach a consensus that all Alliance candidates can support, and which emphasises the principles that give the SDP its distinctive identity.

As long as the Liberals and the SDP work in harmony, it matters little that when both faces are shown, neither blushes. In many parts of the country, members from both parties work happily together — meeting jointly, operating as single 'Alliance' groups on local councils and, in around 50 constituencies, holding joint open selection meetings to choose their parliamentary candidate.

What is more, delegates were told from on high that the separate-identity-versus-merger argument has been put into abeyance until after the election. At that point, said David Owen elliptically on Saturday, 'we will know what to do'. The operative word may be 'do', but the problem is 'we'. If Owen has his way, 'we' won't do anything at all; 'I' will make all the decisions for the SDP.

This is not to say that the party is, in the well-worn phrase, a one-man band. If it were, all would be well. The very term implies a party in harmony. Owen would advise and the party would consent. His difficulty, rather, is that the SDP is *not* a one-man band these days. It has started to acquire the characteristics of older parties, with its factions, dissidents and grudge-bearers.

Owen's greatest problem lies with the SDP's 33-member national committee. Roy Jenkins, Shirley Williams, and William Rodgers all loathe Owen, and a growing minority on the committee dislike his style of leadership. Owen's strength — and their weakness — is that he has a clear strategy, while they do not.

The row within the party over defence has both illustrated and defined the difference between Owen and his critics. Owen believed that the joint SDP-Liberal commission would protect his position. At the outset he regarded John Roper and Bill Rodgers — two of the SDP members of the commission — as 'sound' people who would see off the Liberals' mad-cap anti-nuclear ideas. Roper and Rodgers, in their turn, thought their job was to find a form of words that both Owen and the Liberals could accept.

WHEN THE COMMISSION produced its nuclear formula — to delay a decision on

PETER KELLNER

'whether, and if so how, to replace Polaris' — Owen was already thought by his colleagues to be more than usually tetchy. The SDP had done badly in the Fulham by-election; Owen seemed to think that both politically and electorally the SDP risked being swamped by the Liberals. At one national committee meeting in the Spring, Owen said angrily: 'This party is descending into slush'.

Owen's response was his speech at Southport in May to the Council for Social Democracy. He insisted that Polaris had to be replaced, and that to delay the decision would be to indulge in the kind of 'fudge and mudge' he had left behind in the Labour Party.

Since Southport, most attention has been devoted to the prospects of the two Davids reaching an agreement on defence. Who will yield what ground? Can they agree criteria for making an eventual post-Polaris decision? Is an Anglo-French deal either practical militarily or feasible politically?

Those are certainly important questions. But it has begun to dawn on Owen's critics in the higher reaches of the SDP that they do not reach the heart of the matter. From remarks Owen has made privately to some of the few remaining people within the party that he trusts, those critics are right.

Owen's thinking goes as follows. After the next election the Labour Party will be more left-wing than ever. In a hung parliament, Labour would not want to do a deal with the Alliance. Even after a second or third inconclusive election, Labour would only entertain a deal if it included a non-nuclear defence policy.

Owen has no wish to take part in a pact with a left-inclined Labour Party at all. He despises most present and prospective Labour MPs too much, just as they despise him. He would prefer a deal with a post-Thatcher Conservative Party. He thinks that with people like Peter Walker, Michael Heseltine and Kenneth Baker having more influence, he will be able to reach an accommodation on most areas of policy — some reflation, more public spending, an attack on poverty and, of course, a continuing nuclear defence strategy.

Owen's problem is to take first Steel and then the rest of the Liberal Party with him. Owen believes that the only way to achieve this is to create conditions that make a deal with Labour impossible. Paradoxically, his difficulty is that on almost every aspect of domestic policy a deal *can* be done.

Defence provides the one certain sticking point. If Labour insists that Britain must have a non-nuclear policy, while the Alliance says keep *and replace* Polaris, then a pact, deal, understanding or coalition is out of the question. So Owen's coalition strategy reduces to a specific tactical question: how to commit the Alliance to a pro-nuclear policy?

Owen has first needed to take his own party with him. He has given up with the rest of the Gang of Four. When Bill Rodgers tried to remonstrate with Owen after Southport, Owen refused even to meet Rodgers; the two men subsequently had an angry exchange of letters. Owen cared more about the SDP's National Committee. Before one critical meeting in July, Owen telephoned a number of members whom he thought he could sway to his side. He failed with two, Celia Goodhart and Julia Neuberger, but succeeded with Fiona Beckett, the committee's representative from the home counties. On the day he won a narrow majority for his stand.

As this week's conference approached, Owen wanted to oppose a motion from Edinburgh which 'endorses' the joint SDP-Liberal commission's policies. He changed his mind when it became clear that it would be passed. Instead he announced on Saturday that now the commission's policy had been 'revised', he supported it — on his terms. Owen is alone in believing that any revision has taken place. The point, however, is that Owen has succeeded in finessing his party into allowing him all the room he wants.

Will Steel and the Liberals allow themselves to be dragooned into a strategy that would rule out a Labour-Alliance government and encourage a deal with the Tories? Next week's Liberal Assembly at Eastbourne might supply some answers; on the other hand it might not. □

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THE GOOD MAN WITH SOILED HANDS

David Steel's leadership has seen the Liberal Party emerge from Celtic fringes to acceptance of responsibility; from protest to the Lib-Lab pact. He and the party are now playing for nothing less than a place in government — a role for which he has long prepared himself. JOHN LLOYD profiles the Liberal leader on the eve of his conference

DAVID STEEL has led the Liberal Party for ten years. You could argue that it has been *his* decade politically: for while there is no doubt that the triumphs of Thatcherism and the travails of Labour made the bigger splashes, the solid gains, ratcheting up in the 1979 and 1983 elections, have been for the middle ground he occupies. He expects that to continue (see interview).

Odd then that he should sometimes seem so lightly attached to politics: that he should betray in words and deeds, more than any other leading political figure, a weariness and irritation with his vocation, a sense of regret that he has bound himself to the wheel of fame and envy, power and responsibility. This is what he said in his first speech as leader, to the Liberal conference in Llandudno:

> This year many of you may have wondered whether you should give it all up. You could have had more time with your families, dug your

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Steel: a sea-change in attitudes

DAVID STEEL's 21 years in the Commons and 10 years as Liberal leader have been a good schooling in cheerfulness through adversity. It was in that spirit he talked to the *NS* at his home in Ettrick Bridge. This is an extract from the conversation.

NS: Have the five years of the Alliance's existence provided the political gains you hoped for?
Steel: The truth is none of us knew what to expect at the beginning. The impact now has been greater than I hoped for after the last election. If we keep our present levels of support (around 25 per cent in the polls) I will be very pleased. Remember we always pick up during an election campaign. In 1979 we picked up from 11 per cent to 14 per cent. In 1983 we picked up from 18 to 25 per cent. If we started from a base of 25 per cent, then there's no reason we shouldn't get support somewhere in the low-mid 30s.

NS: Are you not concerned that there are two political traditions in the Alliance tugging apart?
Steel: I think they come together. The identification of the social democrats with the social market is not very different from what we are about. The end result is the same. They have cut the ties with the old die-hard right-wing labourism and the worst aspects of the right-wing trade union movement.

NS: Hasn't Neil Kinnock's move towards the centre of politics cut your appeal? Especially since this is accompanied by an evident moderation in the unions' position?
Steel: I think the change in union power is a permanent thing and will remain, under any future government. But the Labour Party is inevitably seen as a wing of the labour movement. It can't get round that as long as it depends on the unions for support. That's an albatross for it. Neil Kinnock is quite rightly trying to distance himself from it, but he can only go so far.

NS: On the other side of you, do you judge that Thatcherism still has a political appeal?
Steel: Thatcherism has run its course. Its only achievement, if it is *its* achievement, is a correction in the balance of power between the trade unions and the rest of society. But the rest of the record is miserable: particularly the divisions in society which it has fostered, the divisions of geography, of race and of unemployment.

NS: What would be the measures an Alliance government — or an Alliance-influenced government — would bring in?
Steel: Electoral reform, of course. Otherwise —political decentralisation to enable the country to do more through local initiative. The key would be a genuine partnership at all levels. Labour is only tinkering with this: we would be much more full-blooded. Austria is an example: it's a free society, but still fairly directed in economic policy.

In external policy, that means that the country must make up its mind whether it wishes to be a genuine power or not. There is scope for Britain to play a full role in the European Community — we should seize it. We should make a common effort there to combat unemployment: join the European Monetary System as a symbol of our political commitment. The government is slow and half hearted here: it is both little Englander, and little 'American' in its policies.

NS: How do you read the overall political mood of the country?
Steel: There has been a major shift away from class-based politics. They saw us through the '40s, '50s, '60s, even '70s. But now we're seeing a permanent shift: a sea-change in people's attitudes. It's not going back to what it was. ●

garden, or still with a sense of social responsibility devoted your time to any one of a number of good causes. And if you have felt so tempted, there is no need to feel ashamed. *For so have I*, and so at one time or another have most of us on this platform.

This was of course a few months after Jeremy Thorpe resigned as he failed to hold the line that he knew one Norman Scott very little: Steel, then chief whip, had to hold together a party not known then or now for its ability to sink individuality in common silence. But in his *first* speech, to feel obliged to announce that the power he had cunningly fought John Pardoe for, and won, should be as much a burden as a joy to him, shows a very large reserve.

Irrational appeal

There have been longer term reasons for feeling ambivalent about liberalism than the Thorpe affair. The American analyst Seymour Lipset, writing in the later 1950s when it seemed safe to write off the Liberals as a remnant, dismissed them (with other such formations as the French Radicals) as 'irrational' — 'to be against business bureaucracies, trade unions and state regulation is both unrealistic and to some extent irrational'. Yet it was then that David Steel, son of a Scots Presbyterian minister who had worked as a missionary in Kenya, was active in Edinburgh University Liberal politics: became assistant secretary to the Scottish Liberal Party in 1962; and youngest MP when elected (by the irrational voters of Roxburgh, Selkirk and Peebles) in a 1965 by-election.

It was to be sure less irrational to be a Liberal (or a nationalist, or a communist) in Scotland than elsewhere in the UK: the party had clung on to the Celtic fringes, exemplified by Jo Grimond, the party leader, holding Orkney and Shetland like the socially conscious Scots aristocrat he was. The party won the famous Orpington by-election of 1962: but Orpington man was not infinitely reproducible, and the 1964 election produced only nine MPs (though with 11 per cent of the vote) and Grimond's dream of capturing the left of centre once Labour split was 16 years ahead of its time. The Liberal activists were easily patronisable as fuzzy idealists doomed to irrelevance: a party trying to be classless (with proportionately more candidates with public school backgrounds than any other) in an age of the class party.

The attraction of the party for the high-minded Steel was, in part, its very shambles: here was an arena in which his organisational and developing political skills could be deployed to shape and to weld together in a way hardly possible in the larger, monolithic parties. His Presbyterian individualism and evident desire to be socially useful could find a focus in a party which needed him rather more than he needed it.

Anthony Sampson, describing him as he took over the party leadership, says he had 'seemed too good to be in politics . . . among his noisy colleagues he looked a rather priggish boy scout'. The 'boy' has stayed with him, less now as rather more of his (48) years show through on a still youthful face and his political weight is recognised: in particular, as it was realised that he had a vision and that part of it has already worked.

THAT VISION was explicit in the first leadership speech. It was a vision of breaking the two-party structure by inserting the centre between them — and forcing one or other to co-operate with him. Grimond had briefly thought that possible in the mid-sixties — then Harold Wilson's second election produced a runaway parliamentary majority and it was tossed aside. But Steel kept it going: Stuart Mole, his long-time political assistant, says of him that he recognised that 'the electoral arithmetic made it almost inevitable that in breaking the two-party system, multi-party politics would become the norm, at least for a while.' And though much of his party did not like the prospect, he told them in Llandudno that 'we must not give the impression of being afraid to soil our hands with the responsibilities of sharing power'. (He was barracked a little for that.)

Close to Kinnockism

Of course it was not just him. The Liberal Party attracted to it, in the '60s and '70s, individuals at least as ambitious for power as he — Pardoe (remember that Pardoe ran his leadership campaign on the slogan that he would be an 'effective bastard' — a mistake), Trevor Jones, Richard Holme (a close advisor still), Alan Beith, David Penhaligon, and, a new wave, David Alton and Simon Hughes.

But his was the dominant blend: the blend of individualism, a harking back to a tradition of personal liberty (his speeches often include a quotation from J. S. Mill) together with a stated concern that the state be used for social amelioration — very close to the Kinnock formula (in *his* 1985 speech to Labour's conference) of the 'enabling state'. 'Freedom', he said in his 1977 conference address, 'does not begin and end with the free market' — and again, allowing a glimpse of the effort he needs to exert to stay on, he added — 'I want to tell you what sustains me on the long march of Liberal politics. It is our concern for fraternity, for the creation of a self-governing society in which active consent is more important than the enforcement of law, in which participation is more widespread than bureaucratic control'.

Now this *was* meeting more than an echo. The Tories had a leader who emphasised a personal liberty wholly divorced from materialism of any kind: the liberty for all to dine at Claridge's; but Labour was suffering an intellectual haemorhage from within among those who thought it had come to the limits of its statism, and that its corporatism was impinging on liberty. Chief among those was Roy Jenkins, the Welsh miner's son whose

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hero was Asquith and who publicly doubted that taxes could be raised forever or that public ownership, beyond a certain point, was compatible with freedom. The period of the Lib-Lab pact, so stressful for Steel within his own party, nevertheless brought him close to Labour's right wing 'liberals'. He had been critical of such people; in 1977, he talked of right-wing Labour figures 'hawking their expensive consciences around': Jenkins must have crossed his mind. But actually there was little between them.

The great liberals of this century — Lloyd George, Keynes, Beveridge — were all statists: the last two of whom, at least, gave the Labour Party right and centre a governing ideology. Steel was as much in their tradition as he was in Mill's.

He is thus able to argue, on firm ground, that social democracy in its party form is essentially social liberalism: that there is no fundamental ideological or philosophic barrier to full merger of the parties. The argument could be pushed further (though he does not): that the politics now being shaped by Labour's leadership also have little ideological distinction from his own. Certainly there are those in the Labour Party as in the SDP who distrust modern liberalism for being, still, too woolly, too anti-statist, too dogmatically devolutionary, to grasp fully what a governing party would have to do. But that hardly marks an ideological divide. In the realignment of the left, the policies and practice of social liberalism cast a wide net. David Steel is not too nice to realise that, come the next election, the cards may so fall that he could be the broker between anti-Thatcherite forces which might coalesce to form the *only* alternative. □

ROGER WODDIS

Shit and sugar

'If there was a market in mass-produced portable nuclear weapons, we'd market them too.' — Alan Sugar, head of Amstrad, in the September issue of International Management.

Russia is red, Britain is blue,
Sugar is sweet and bombs are too.

There are grocers selling butter,
There are butchers selling meat,
There are traders selling apples,
From a barrow in the street;
But the nicest little earner,
That is certain to expand,
Is the kind of Armageddon
You can carry in your hand.

A machine that works like magic
And can process all your words
Yields a modest little mark-up
That is strictly for the birds.
We must bow to market-forces,
Though the shit begins to fall:
In the death-wish of a salesman
Lies the brightest hope of all.

Russia is red, Britain is blue,
Sugar is sweet and bombs are too.

DEBATE

THE TIES THAT BIND

TONY BENN on why the Labour Party should seriously consider a non-aligned defence policy

A NON—ALIGNED foreign and defence policy should now be at the centre of debate on the left. A number of us in the Campaign Group of Labour MPs have discussed the issue, and have circulated a draft statement to interested groups and the diplomatic representatives of the non-aligned countries.

Over the next few days, before Labour's conference, a pamphlet setting out our position will be published. We believe it should attract support: there's evidence it is already doing so. For example:

- The American bombing of Libya aroused a great deal of opposition and highlighted the extent to which Britain has become little more than a foreign airstrip for the USA.
- The Chernobyl disaster underlined the dangers of nuclear weapons even if none were ever to be dropped on Britain.
- The experience of Labour in New Zealand, effectively excluded by the Americans from ANZUS, as a punishment for its opposition to the presence of US warships with nuclear weapons in its own territorial waters. This has re-opened the question of whether British membership of NATO is compatible with the implementation of Labour's policy of closing all US nuclear bases in Britain.
- Recent public opinion polls have confirmed that there has been a subtle change in public attitudes towards the Cold War, influenced by Reagan's negative stance on disarmament and his commitment to Star Wars, as contrasted with Gorbachev's proposals now seen, by many people, to be sincere, because they are so obviously in the interests of the Russians.
- The public support given to Bob Geldof's famine relief projects in Africa also reminded us of a strain of genuine idealism in Britain and underlined the linkage between the huge arms budgets and the pitifully inadequate funding for those who are fighting hunger.
- It is possible to trace a general desire for what could be called non-alignment, back into the history of the party, arising out of its long opposition to imperialism and militarism, and its commitment to internationalism, to the League, and to the UN.

Indeed there was a serious Third Force movement, within the party, after 1945, which was opposed to the bloc system, and looked to a very different role for Britain in the post-war world, before the Cold War came to dictate the nature of our foreign policy, and tie us so closely to the USA.

The Labour Conference passed its first unilateralist resolution in 1960, and earned the bitter opposition of Hugh Gaitskell and the Labour establishment which backed him when he pledged to 'fight and fight and fight again' to get it reversed.

Since then CND resolutions have won a series of substantial majorities at successive conferences and unilateral nuclear disarmament will, presumably, appear in Labour's next general election manifesto.

But the effect that removing US nuclear bases might have on Britain's membership of NATO has never been fully explored. It's an important question, since both the NEC and Conference are presently committed to that NATO link.

At the 1985 conference nearly 2½ million votes were cast for a motion proposing a re-examination of the party's attitude towards NATO, a vote that occurred *before* the Libyan bombing and the Chernobyl disaster.

OVER THE YEARS the realism has slowly grown in Britain, and in the party, that the claim made for NATO as the guardian of freedom and human rights has little or no substance. America is increasingly being seen as an Empire, with foreign and defence policies clearly designed to protect its power, its influence and its investments, from South Africa to Grenada, with Nicaragua as the current focus of its counter-revolutionary terrorism.

In the light of that understanding many people are beginning to question Britain's new status as a semi-protectorate under the effective military control of the Pentagon, dependent on the Americans for our nuclear know-how, and having to accept US supervision, and control, of our own intelligence services, in return for a strictly limited access to theirs.

But the problem goes deeper than that, because the substantial increase in Britain's defence expenditure, amounting to 20 per cent in real terms over the last seven years, has been largely imposed by the USA on its NATO partners. This burden has seriously handicapped our industry and economy, and diverted skilled scientists and engineers into defence at the expense of civil production.

It is also becoming clear that much of the poverty in the Third World could be avoided if only a fraction of the West's defence spend on high-tech weapons were to be diverted to provide the tractors, pumps, transport systems and simple equipment so urgently required in Asia, Africa and Latin America.

These, then, are some of the considerations that could make a campaign for non-alignment seem attractive to many people in Britain, if the case is put forward seriously and on its merits. Everything points to a steady growth of public support for it, and the likely American refusal to accept Labour's demand for the removal of the cruise and other US nuclear bases, when we come into office, will raise the question in its most direct form.

Unless the choice that we are almost certain to have to make then is raised *now*, we could all be in serious trouble — for the labour movement would never abandon its non-nuclear policy at the first sign of American opposition.

These are some of the reasons why the new campaign for non-alignment is now so relevant, and why it merits the serious consideration hitherto denied it. □

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BUT WHY DO THEY CALL THEMSELVES FEMINISTS?

SARAH BENTON reports on the intellectual flounderings of the newly-formed 'Association of Libertarian Feminists'

Left: Teresa Gorman, heavy on anecdote, light on facts; Right: the energetic and insignia-laden Chris Tame

IT WAS CLEAR before anyone said a word that the inaugural meeting of the British Association of Libertarian Feminists ('For Life, Liberty and Property') was out of the run of usual feminist meetings. Shortly after 10 o'clock last Sunday 17 men but only ten women were gathered in the august meeting room of the Institute of Economic Affairs in the suitably 18th century back streets of Westminster. They faced a framed award to the IEA for its 'outstanding contribution to man's freedom', surrounded by rows of portraits of IEA heroes, not one of them a woman.

There were other clues. The occasional coil of cigarette smoke — a sign long since banned from left-wing meetings — drifted across the room. And then there were the clothes; young women smartly turned out in freshly powdered faces with polished shoes and pressed skirts. Not a cropped head or dangly earring in sight. By the middle of the day, this had changed, but of that, more later.

The express aim of the Libertarian Feminists is to 'rehabilitate feminism as an individualistic set of ideas' from its imprisonment by socialist thought. The association came into being some months ago set up by a small group of women associated with the Libertarian Alliance, itself a small group which pursues a peculiarly strict and narrow notion of what constitutes liberty.

Two of the founders are a young solicitor who uses the pseudonym Johanna Faust and Marjory Brady, a student working this vacation for an obscure association for 'a free Russia.' They have been helped by Chris Tame, founder of the Libertarian Alliance, and a co-author of their first publication, on surrogate mothering. Mr Tame, an energetic and widely-read man, works for a large finance company which he would rather not be named in public. Amid this mix of disguise and the dimmer corners of British politics, Mr Tame's body is a show-place of meaningful insignia; the flashy pin of a self-improvement cult called Insight, a chunky bracelet and heavy rings, round his neck a large Jewish chai ('life') sign, enhanced by his scarlet shirt with upturned collar and unbuttoned to the midriff, normally a symbol of sexual availability.

There was no hint of discretion about the first speaker, the small and flamboyant ('I love telling anecdotes about myself') Teresa Gorman. She was billed as the only Westminster City Councillor to have voted against restrictions on sex shops in Soho, and is the founder of an association for small businesses.

It was easier to detect her feminism in her anecdotes than in her politics. Sir Keith Joseph invites her around to discuss education and opens the talk with: 'Oh Teresa how nice to see you and what a pretty dress you're wearing'. She is recommended to sit on a body called Ecosoc, but Sir John Hoskyns personally rings up Downing Street to get her replaced by a member of the 'old boy network'.

But for women in general, she thinks there is far too much belly-aching. She is cheerfully unperturbed by the problem of women's low pay, arguing that women receive 'psychic rewards' such as, she suggests, the pleasure of seeing someone in town wearing the jersey you have been paid 40p an hour to knit. Psychic seems the right word for such an elusive compensation for 40p an hour homeworkers.

But, right in line with libertarian thinking, most of her speech consisted of an attack on the Equal Opportunities Commission for making women's position worse, not better. Her back-up evidence was rather shaky. These are some of her instances:

- When the EOC appointed a male head, three women took the EOC to court, funded by the EOC — a vignette ripe for Lewis Carroll, Ms Gorman suggested. (Fact: one woman took the EOC to court alleging discrimination for the job of EOC chief executive. She received no funding from the EOC.)
- The EOC supported a man in South Wales who wanted to force women workers to handle 'noxious substances'. (Fact: the EOC did support the case; but the work was dirty, not 'noxious'. The women had not wanted to mess up their hair or take communal showers. Lord Denning ruled that the 'chivalry' of their exemption was not within the law.)
- That since the EOC got going, single sex colleges at Oxbridge no longer dared discriminate in favour of women and indeed it had encouraged men to muscle in on what were women's jobs. (Fact: it is the EEC not EOC which is pressing for an amendment in the current sex discrimination bill to outlaw the advertisements for women staff which the five remaining women's colleges in Oxbridge do still produce. The EOC shares Ms Gorman's concern at the lack of opportunity for women academics and has argued *against* this proposed amendment.)

The point was, as Ms Gorman kept saying, it's the free market that frees women; State action always makes it worse. Ms Gorman's prescription for change was simple; a knee in the groin for a sexual harasser; a neat exit from a dead-end job to something better. Ms Gorman herself had left teaching to set up her own business selling biology teaching aids. Her current million pound turnover is almost wholly based on orders from State education systems.

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An altogether more scholarly perspective on women's rights came from Stephen Davies. An undergraduate, postgraduate and tutor at the new right enclave of St Andrew's University, he now lectures at Manchester Polytechnic. He argued that many of the leading 19th century feminists, such as Harriet Martineau and Josephine Butler, held strong laissez-faire views which were inseparable from their arguments for women's rights. While conventional historians ignored such women altogether, socialist feminists excised the philosophical root of staunch individualism.

A fair point. He went on to argue that, contrary to the Whig view of history which saw an inevitable progression from a vague liberal movement to its 'distillate', the radical socialist belief, there had always been the two distinct strands of socialist and individualist feminism. The former had survived better because of its toehold in the labour movement. But if feminism did not lead inevitably to socialism, individualism did lead inevitably to feminism because, like feminists, 'the radical individualist sees power relations existing throughout society, such as marriage'.

We have a *tradition*?

This should have been the point when Ms Faust, Ms Gorman and Mr Tame all disagreed with him. In earlier conversations, each of them had said that the only significant form of power they saw in society was that exercised by the State over the individual. And if the labour movement had played a role at all, it was to exclude women from the production process (a line of thought pioneered by socialist feminists).

But they did not. Indeed, the entire audience seemed awed to discover that they could claim as their inheritance such a coherent and politically respectable past.

ALL THAT IS except a small knot of women and children who had arrived late in the morning to give the meeting that unmistakable feminist aura of bright clothes and spiky hair. Suddenly, one of them spoke. Her voice filling out by the minute she denounced the gathering for its reactionary and pro-capitalist instincts. It was too much for Maureen Davies, wife of the speaker. 'Shut up', she screamed, rigid with fury. 'Let her speak', counselled her husband. And the denouncer spoke on, berating their middle classness ('how dare you, I'm upper class' cried a young man, to titters) and finishing with 'I've come to remind you lot that one day you will suffer for it and this building will go up in flames.'

Christ Tame began to prowl purposefully round the room, the chairwoman looked nervous and more of the group sprang in in support. 'One at a time, girls', ventured another young man, but this time the titters were lost in the general uproar. 'Out, out' cried Ms Faust, pointing to the door, and out they went.

On the pavement they explained they were associated with the magazine *Anarchist Feminist*, had seen a notice of the meeting in the feminist magazine *Outwrite*, were outraged that a bunch of pro-capitalists who believe in private police forces should have appropriated the word libertarian from its proper anarchist home. They had wanted, they said, just to cause a disruption. And off they stalked singing, the sound of their voices drifting through the room like the first smoke of their threatened conflagration.

Well, that proves my point, said Mr Tame. Whatever it was, one middle-aged woman had missed it. Was there not some literature, she asked, that could be given to these unfortunate and misguided young women? And after some desultory discussion on the market forces that had liberated women — it was excellent that women now did the boring work, offered one man, for it freed men 'to do the remarkable things' — Ms Brady closed the session. Stephen Davies had proved two points, she said: the necessity of the belief in individual sovereignty and the fact that the State always did the opposite to the good intended. Mr Davies took this bowdlerisation in the right spirit.

AS WELL HE might. The Feminist Libertarian Alliance may be anxious to uncover an honourable political tradition from Harriet Martineau through Josephine Butler and John Stuart Mill to themselves. But the claim seems more akin to Ronald Reagan's scrabble through graveyards and genealogical tables in search of reputably Irish ancestors than to any lived tradition. There is in today's Libertarian Alliance no trace of the compassionate and ardent campaigning on behalf of black slaves or women, or the rich concept of liberty that distinguished those 19th century liberals. If they have an heir, she is more likely to found in women like Lady Margaret Simey, Liberal councillor on the Liverpool police committee, whose speeches and pamphlets on behalf of her black and working-class constituents against an unjust State, and whose notion of public service would find no echo in the meeting room of the IEA.

In fact, before Sunday, Libertarians did not claim an ancestry from 19th century campaigners. Apart from the American and Austrian economists, there is, says Mr Tame, an outstandingly influential woman libertarian, the American science fiction writer and essayist, Ayn Rand. In a book of 20 essays called *The New Right Enlightenment*, Ayn Rand is the most consistently cited influence after the economists.

She has nothing to say about women. Rather she writes about the world familiar to Conservatives, science fiction writers and 'survivalists'; a world in which chaos constantly threatens abetted by thuggish left-wingers and salvation lies with the elite of men who, possessors of the brightest new technology, will gain mastery over the wimps and the wilderness. Thus, in *The Anti-Industrial Revolution* she claims that the goal of ecologists (bad) is 'obvious': it is 'the destruction of the remnants of capitalism in today's mixed economy and the establishment of global dictatorship.' Their basic motive, as collectivists, is hatred of achievement: 'In today's drugged orgy of boastfully self righteous swinishness the masks are coming down and you can hear all but explicit confessions of that hatred.' Such scorn for achievers 'captures the essence of the deaf, blind, fear-ridden, hatred-eaten human ballast that men of the mind — the prime movers of human survival and progress — have had to drag along, to feed and be martyred by, through all the millennia of mankind's history.' It is a paranoid and profoundly anti-humanist vision.

There are many science fiction writers who inspire the Libertarian right — indeed, Mr Tame has written a short essay on the connection. The women seem less inspired by this invented world of the will-powered hero and his glittering machines. Yet they are similarly motivated by the overwhelming desire both to defeat socialism and also to show it is already vanquished. But it is hard to detect why they wish to lay claim to the name feminism. Indeed, the very notion of a whole social group — women — who have a collective political cause — feminism — which distinguishes them from men would seem to be anathema to this brand of libertarianism with its strangled notion of the individual alone. When a few men at the meeting took up the anarchist feminist accusations and queried the presence of men, it was the women present who most staunchly denied that they had any interest separate from men's.

Insofar as they are members of anything it is the Conservative Party, or, more likely, the Federation of Conservative Students. Yet they are more outspoken against the traditional authoritarianism of the Conservatives than they are against the rumbustious and gleeful sexism of the lads in the FCS. The only issue to which they have so far applied a clear-cut individualist feminism is surrogate mothering — a straightforward case of a contract under civil law. On abortion they are divided.

Vileness and wickedness

Up until now, the main spokesman on sexual and moral issues for Libertarians has been Brian Micklethwait, assistant manager of the Alternative Bookshop in Covent Garden. Functioning like a moral conscience in search of a rigorous cause and more rigorous editor, Micklethwait has written copiously on the moral roots of all issues. Thus pornography should be published because socialist ideas are. 'Socialist propaganda undoubtedly causes people to commit unspeakable acts' and 'may plant vile thoughts' in readers' heads; but the reader must resist. In the same preoccupation with vileness and wickedness, he elsewhere denounces leftists who 'wickedly' argue that freedom is an illusion, the sociology departments that are 'dens of vice', that Marx wrote *Capital* when he was 'an older and wickeder man' and so on.

It is doubtful that this new Feminist Alliance will take its lead from him either. And they will have to decide whether they support the Libertarian Alliance's argument that there should be no sexual age of consent, for sex with an adult who has 'befriended' a child involves no violation of that child's rights. While the Libertarians correctly point out that many feminist slogans about the right to control one's own body are about individual rights, they are likely to be marooned in their backwater by their connections with political bodies which resolutely deny that the economic practice of private enterprise or the force of male culture in any way limit women's freedom. □

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AP

THE PRESENCE THAT HAUNTS GORBACHEV

The Soviet leader has to keep an eye on KGB boss Viktor Chebrikov (above), as the Daniloff case showed. ANDY McSMITH reports

THE STRANGE story of Nicholas Daniloff's arrest has left some Kremlin watchers wondering how secure Mikhail Gorbachev's position really is in the secret world of Kremlin politics. The American journalist was charged with treason after the General Secretary had been sent a personal appeal from President Reagan — as if someone on the Soviet side wanted to scupper the forthcoming summit, and make Gorbachev appear personally responsible.

The mini-crisis was not in Gorbachev's own best interests, and may have been sprung on him by the KGB, who have the authority to arrest and charge a foreigner without the General Secretary's approval, provided they have something which passes for evidence. If so, the affair has been an eye-opener for anyone who believes that the General Secretary can rule the Soviet communist party with an iron hand. In fact, every leader since Stalin has had to negotiate a consensus between the representatives of powerful interests to be able to function at all and, in certain respects, Gorbachev's position is weaker than any of his predecessors' — except, of course, for his short-lived predecessor, Constantin Chernenko. In particular, he must tread warily in his dealings with the KGB and its boss, Viktor Chebrikov.

There are historical precedents for the Daniloff affair. The persecution of the Jewish refusenik Shcharansky, a decade ago, is now seen as the means by which the then KGB chairman, Yuri Andropov, muscled into the debate on foreign policy because it demonstrated that deals with the United States required his personal consent. In 1960, the security forces put a stop to a planned summit between Nikita Khrushchev and President Eisenhower by capturing the U-2 spy plane pilot, Gary Powers, and set off a domestic political crisis which wrecked several eminent careers. Before either Nikita Khrushchev or Leonid Brezhnev could even establish that they were first among equals, they had to see off their respective heads of the security services, Beria and Shelepin. In the long run, Gorbachev has the exceptional personal advantage that he is still the youngest member of the Politburo; but, immediately, there is probably nothing he can do about Mr Chebrikov, who is 63, except wait for him to retire.

However, it doesn't follow that Chebrikov or the organisation he heads are opposed to disarmament talks with the West. Foreign policy is not the single most important item on the Politburo agenda. Gorbachev's own prestige is wedded to his highly ambitious plan to double industrial output by the end of the century, without resorting to the traditional Soviet method of piling on machines and raw materials with proportionately decreasing results. Energy consumption per rouble of national income is meant to decrease by over a quarter, and metal consumption by nearly half. In the same period, the average Soviet worker's output is supposed to be more than doubled, through an intricate combination of greater motivation, better management, and new and more reliable technology.

This would be a high-risk political strategy for any leader — the more so for a General Secretary with no experience of industrial management whatever. The whole of Gorbachev's career, from his university days until he was promoted by Andropov four years ago, has been absorbed in running agriculture — still the one sector of the Soviet economy which is under his personal control. The head of the massive new Ministry for Agro-Industries has worked closely with Gorbachev for 30 years — but has notably failed, so far, to gain membership of the Politburo, as if the other members had clubbed together to keep out the boss's favourite. This sector is a notorious graveyard for political careers, and it is unlikely that Gorbachev's prestige will be boosted by any spectacular successes here. ▷

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THE MAN with the greatest degree of control over industry is the new Prime Minister, Nikolai Ryzhkov, who has been Gorbachev's ally in recent political struggles, but is in no sense his client. If he is anyone's creature, then, like most of the current leadership, he owes his success to Gorbachev's own patron, Andropov. His speech to the party congress in March indicates that he is less keen than the party leader on new methods. Gorbachev is more likely to win arguments over industrial policy if he can turn up to Politburo meetings with some spectacular achievement in some other field under his belt. Foreign policy is the likeliest bet, and, for propaganda value at least, his successes abroad have been considerable.

A 'professional' force

Chebrikov, meanwhile, was once part of Brezhnev's personal entourage, hailing from Brezhnev's home town on the Dnieper; he was given a senior job in the KGB nearly 20 years ago, to look after the interests of the 'Dnieper mafia'. In the past four years, he has thrown his weight behind Andropov's and Gorbachev's campaigns against drunkenness, absenteeism, and corruption, thus protecting the KGB. None of its senior officers have been affected by Gorbachev's purges, except one who retired at the age of 75. There are more serving KGB officers on the Central Committee than ever before. The First Deputy Prime Minister is a former KGB official, of 28 years standing. In Latvia, the former KGB boss is now running the party machine; and in Kazakhstan another KGB trainee is apparently being lined up to do the same. Generally, the power of the KGB has been growing for the past ten years.

It is, of course, a very different organisation from the one run by the revolting sadist, Lavrenti Beria, with a more 'modern' and professional ethos, and is, on the whole, an instrument which serves the interests of the communist party. Even so, it has its own sectional interests to defend.

THE ORIGIN of the Daniloff affair may not be concerned with foreign policy at all. For example, in the wake of the Chernobyl tragedy, the Politburo has naturally taken steps to improve safety precautions in all nuclear plants. Security at these installations is a traditional KGB function, and it is possible that something which Gorbachev demanded has offended KGB sensibilities, and that they retaliated by making life difficult for Gorbachev in an arena which is especially important to him.

In releasing Gennadi Zakharov, the Soviet physicist at the United Nations in New York who had allegedly run a spy ring for the past three years, the US administration has secured Daniloff's release from prison — to the dismay of President Reagan's supporters. If the administration goes further, and releases Zakharov in return for Daniloff, it will be a KGB victory — but it will also allow the much-touted Washington summit between Reagan and Gorbachev to go ahead, and may see Gorbachev return in triumph to Moscow once more. Even then, the General Secretary will have to keep looking over his shoulder for the shadow of the KGB. □

EUROPEAN LEFT GROPES FOR UNITY

Even Denis Healey was there on video. DONALD SASSOON on a 'realistic' Euro-left-fest in Turin earlier this month

EUROPEAN COMMUNISM is virtually defunct in its traditional form. The card now being played by Europe's leading party, the Communist Party of Italy (PCI), is that of democratic socialism: indeed, of social democracy. Alessandro Natta, successor to Berlinguer at the head of the party, recently admitted that if social democracy was defined as something like the German Social Democrats, then yes, there would be few differences of substance between the two parties.

It's an admission made easier by the fact that, evidently, European socialism/social democracy is itself in a state of flux, not least because the successes of the new right have shaken the thinking left from its complacency. We are all revisionists now.

Earlier this month, I attended an event in Turin largely dedicated to the problems of the European left. It was the PCI's first 'Eurofestival' dedicated entirely to this theme: it is a development of the Festival dell' Unita which are organised in virtually every village town and city throughout Italy in the summer to help support the party's increasingly expensive newspaper — all of which try to combine entertainment, culture and politics. In the smaller villages you get barbecued sausages, a funfair and a speech or two: but in the cities the communists pride themselves on the quality of the food they serve (Italian communists are congenital foodies); on the quality and range of the entertainment; and on the special themes selected for discussion — ecology, feminism, youth and so on.

Johnny Rotten came too

The new allegiances of the PCI are amply evidenced in the printed programme of the Turin Eurofestival. This 72-page brochure, clearly financed by masssive advertising (Coca Cola, Fiat, banks, insurance companies, publishers, food manufacturers, steel — no need for Moscow gold!) describes — among other more exciting entertainment, such as the Red Skins and former Johnny Rotten of the Sex Pistols — 18 days of debates.

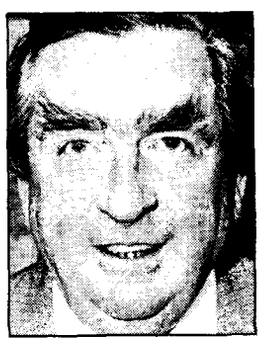
An examination of the affiliation of the participants gives us an indication of the current international preoccupations of the PCI. There is not a single representative of the 'socialist countries' with the exception of Vadim Zagladin, deputy head of the international committee of the Soviet CP. The West European communists are there but they must feel like relatives who just had to be invited: the French, Yugoslav, Portugese and Greek CP have all been bunched up in a single evening devoted to the problems of the Mediterranean. Only the Spanish CP is there in force with five invitees.

Alongside this the Turin communists had ranged socialists from Holland, Switzerland, Sweden, Belgium, Greece, Denmark, no less than eight German social-democrats (including Peter Glotz the secretary-general), four French, and six Spanish. Britain is there with two MEPs, Denis Healey on videotape, the *New Statesman* and one representative from the Communist Party. A novel attention to ecology is demonstrated by the presence of three German Greens. The decision to establish a dialogue with the US Democrats is underlined by the presence of Senator George McGovern (perfectly at ease among commies). Representatives of the Israeli Mapam party and of the PLO serve to show the PCI's ability to make friends across sectarian lines.

One of the most important debates had an interesting format. Throughout the summer a TV crew was sent throughout Europe to tape interviews with senior figures of left-wing parties. The film was then projected on a big screen at the Festival and a debate followed. The videotape will eventually be distributed throughout the party and used for discussion.

The taped interviews were with J. Maria Benegas (PSOE), Lionel Jospin (Secretary General of the French Socialist Party), Peter Glotz, Denis Healey, Gerardo Iglesias (Spanish CP) and Natta and Napolitano for the PCI. There was obviously a lot of Euroleft rhetoric: how nice would it be if we were all together fighting around a common programme for a socialist Europe (not such niceness from Healey, I hasten to add), but there was also a real attempt to stake out positions.

The Spanish socialist thought that the best place for Spanish and Portuguese communists was to be in opposition and not to make a fuss, but he also expressed what is the biggest problem in the search for left unity in Europe: co-ordination of policies, especially economic and defence policies, implies a unified electoral cycle with socialist governments



Healey: easier to co-operate on foreign policy than economics

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emerging at the same time in at least the main West European countries. This, so far, has never happened.

IT IS CLEAR that Euroleft unity will not come about in one single wave but will be built around single issues and that there will have to be an informal agreement to disagree. There is, however, an overall medium-to-long term aim already accepted by the French, Spanish, German and Italian Socialists as well as by the PCI: *European political and economic union*. Here the Labour Party is clearly on the outside (but for how long?).

On defence policy Peter Glotz reaffirmed his own party's commitment to a withdrawal of Pershing and cruise 'in the context of the withdrawal of the Soviet SS20 sited after 1979'. Something short of unilateralism but not very distant from what will probably be the position of a future 'realistic' Labour government. This position is shared by the PCI but not by the Italian Socialists (who, unlike the others, are in favour of Star Wars) while the French (*all* the French including the communists) love their bomb and intend to keep it. During the debate the Spanish socialist, Joaquin Nadal, admitted he was worried that Glotz's advocacy of the creation of a nuclear-free zone in central Europe might cause US pressure for nuclearisation of the European periphery. German reassurances that international solidarity will enable Spain to withstand pressure caused a sceptical eyebrow to be lifted.

And talking of eyebrows: what did Healey say? Not much (the producer of the video told me he had little time), but he underlined the fact that the anti-Europeanism of the Labour Party was giving way to the realisation that Europe must play an autonomous role within NATO and ensure the continuation of the dialogue between the USSR and the USA. He saw the possibilities of common European action to be much greater in the field of foreign policy (particularly in trying to arrive at a common European position on the Middle East and the Third World) than in the economy.

That must be so: all those interviewed said that one of the fundamental issues facing the Euro-left was that of unemployment, but nothing concrete was suggested except a reduction of the working week (by the Germans supported by the PCI). Peter Glotz admitted that the Euro-left was something which existed only in theory. There were not enough contacts and not even a common journal where they could exchange views.

Glotz assumed that the new right was far from being on the run. It still held the crucial cards in Europe, still controlled the most important countries and was still in a hegemonic position. What the left needed was not only European economic union (to withstand American and Japanese competition) but also a common cultural policy againt the cultural dominance of the USA. These points had the consensus of the French, equally worried about *Dallas* and *Dynasty*. Glotz concluded by saying that the left had really only five years to get its act together: 'If by then we have not advanced decisively we will have become an American colony'.

Clearly most of the initiatives for the development of the Euro-left are coming from the German Social Democrats and the Italian Communists supported by the Spanish left. The Labour Party is still seen as isolationist, insular and anti-European. It does not seem to give much importance to contacts with other European parties. What is not known abroad is the pitiful resources the party devotes to foreign policy; an underpaid research assistant in Walworth Road is supposed to follow the whole of Europe: the shadow minister for Europe has a very low status (most NEC members do not know who the person is) and there is no great effort to involve others in helping the party (which abolished its European sub-committee a few years ago without even informing those who had been co-opted onto it).

Euro-left and Labour

In fact the Labour Party is much nearer the Euro-left position than it cares to admit: the 'new realism' is busy revising much of the party's tradition in a process analogous to the German SPD's impending revision of its 1959 Bad Godesberg programme and the developments in the Italian CP.

One of the most fruitful meeting-points for these three parties is the post-Chernobyl concern for nuclear energy and ecological-oriented growth. Here the main obstacle for left unity is likely to be the French socialists (who have yet to come up with an analysis of 'what went wrong') rather than the Labour Party. What is needed is for the Labour Party to start thinking in European terms, but this will not happen as long as for many the automatic reflex is to reach for Dennis Skinner whenever they hear the word Europe. □

WEST BANK AND GAZA

THE ENDS OF THEIR TETHERS

IRENE ERTUGRUL on the increasingly hardline attitudes of Palestinians living under Israeli military occupation

PALESTINIANS on the West Bank and Gaza are discouraged, confused, exasperated, desperate. They feel that, as a people, they have tried everything to gain the right to form at least an independent rump state in their historic homeland — to no avail. And all that is now being offered to them is a dubious 'improvement in the quality of life' under military occupation. Meanwhile, confiscation of their land continues, and the Israeli settlements steadily expand their grip on the area's scarce resources.

These Palestinians may be critical of their own leadership. It has, after all, brought them no relief after almost twenty years of military occupation. But the results of an opinion poll conducted from 26 July to 8 August (and released last week) show that 71.1 per cent of them still prefer Yasser Arafat to King Hussein, who gleaned a backing of only 3.4 per cent. This rejection of the king ('Under Jordon we would go back, not to 1948, but to the 1920s' was the assessment of a Gaza Palestinian) comes despite Hussein's recent drive to supplant PLO influence in the territories. Backed by Israel and the United States, he has tried to attract support by a variety of measures: exerting financial pressure on individual Palestinians, as well as local institutions, suppressing (with the cooperation of the Israeli censor) criticism of Jordan in the Palestinian press, and offering 200 Jordanian passports to residents in Gaza (who now must travel abroad with only a *Laisser-passer*).

THE SURVEY, commissioned jointly by the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, the American newspaper *Newsday*, and *Al-Fajr*, an East Jerusalem Arabic newspaper, was termed by Israeli West Bank expert Meron Benvenisti 'the most thorough endeavour to date to gauge Palestinian views on current political issues.' It revealed sentiments among a representative sampling of the 1.3 million Palestinians in the territories that could be regarded as even more hardline than views expressed by Yasser Arafat, the mainstream PLO leader.

Rejecting UN resolution 242 because it does not recognize their right to self-determination, 77 per cent of those polled felt that the establishment of a 'democratic Palestinian state' in all of Palestine (replacing Israel) would be the optimum solution. For half, however, the 'preferred interim solution' was the establishment of a Palestinian entity in the West Bank and Gaza, alongside Israel. Only 2 per cent were willing to have this mini-state linked with Jordan. None opted for 'automony as currently proposed by the Israeli leadership.'

Violence against Israelis, both civilian and military, was widely viewed as justified and legitimate. Asked which tactics they thought most effective as a way to solve the Palestinian problem, 60.7 per cent endorsed 'armed struggle', with only 7.3 per cent choosing 'diplomatic initiative'.

More than half of those questioned said that they or a member of their immediate family had experienced 'beating, physical abuse or threats by the Israeli occupation authorities.' This response should be viewed in the light of corroborated reports that torture has again become widespread in Israeli jails. (It had diminished in the late 1970s, following a graphic *Sunday Times* report on it in June 1977, world-wide protest and the pressure that US President Carter put on Prime Minister Begin, but was resumed after Yitzhak Rabin took over the Defense Ministry in 1984). Israeli and Palestinian lawyers estimate that close to 60 per cent of the adult male population in the Territories has experienced imprisonment, and if one includes those called for interrogation, the figure rises to 70-80 per cent.

THE POLL thus reveals how Palestinians

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feel. What they can do to improve their lot is another question, and one to which encouraging answers are scarce. While, some years ago, Israel was willing to trade territory for peace, intransigent champions of Greater Israel now talk only of 'peace in return for peace'. In his discussions with President Mubarak of Egypt last week, Prime Minister Peres was expressly forbidden by his coalition cabinet to make any concessions to Mubarak regarding Palestinian self-determination or a role for the PLO in regional peace negotiations. And with Yitzhak Shamir assuming the prime ministership in October, the chances of any Israeli acknowledgement of Palestinian national aspirations will diminish, and his hardline policies and abrasive manner may well provoke a heightening of tension in the area. 'Peres may not have given the Palestinians anything, but at least he was polite to them" said one Israeli journalist.

Many Israelis do indeed dream of a country 'cleaned' of Arabs (both within Israel where the Arab population is now 17 per cent) and in the Occupied Territories, which they hope will eventually be annexed. There is much open talk of 'somehow' inducing the Arabs to leave the confines of Greater Israel and move to 'any' Arab state. Other Israelis remain silent, unhappy at the way things are going but — in the current heated atmosphere — fearful of being labelled bleeding hearts or traitors.

Only a very small group of Israelis are willing to become personally involved in opposing the occupation. And although many of them believe (as do most Palestinians) that the occupation is here to stay, they feel compelled to do what they can to at least curb some of its abuses.

Peace groups abound: a recent issue of the liberal Israeli publication, *New Outlook*, ran a five-page listing of them. But most exist only on paper and some, such as Peace Now, have been virtually dormant since the crisis of the Lebanese war receded. It is only since the beginning of 1985, however, that any joint organizations, linking Israelis with Palestinians from the Occupied Territories, have started functioning. There are now three: The Committee Against the Iron Fist, The Alternative Information Centre and a new Women's group started by Mary Khass, supervisor of pre-school education in Gaza. The aims of the three groups are similar: to publicize and demonstrate against abuses of human rights in the Territories with the hope, thereby, of stopping them.

Those in Britain who saw ITV's documentary 'Courage Along the Divide' last week will have witnessed not only passionate debates among Israelis regarding the morality of occupation, but an accurate sampling of what life for Palestinians is like in the Territories. The producer, Victor Schonfeld, grandson of a renowned British rabbi, has lived in Israeli for varying periods since 1969. His motive in making the film was that he 'cares passionately about the fate of Israel, social justice and peace.' It has drawn vehement criticism, however, from segments of the Jewish community here in Britain. To these critics, Schonfeld retorts by asking how much time they themselves had actually spent in the Occupied Territories. 'I don't think they know anything about it,' he concludes. □

DIARY

'Ratel'

Soweto

Thursday 4th. Off to Soweto to attend a mass funeral. Sixteen of us left from a Johannesburg suburb at 9.00 am, and as the saying goes, I counted all of them back at about 12.30 pm. We were stopped briefly outside Soweto, but allowed to enter. Twenty-seven victims who were killed in 'unrest related incidents' last week were to be buried.

The government's first reaction was to ban all mass funerals. A limit of 200 people in attendance, and only four bodies to be buried at a time were then allowed. These restrictions were reinforced in the morning when, at about 7.00 am, an order went out to the undertakers not to release more than four bodies for burial.

○

We arrived at St Paul's in Soweto, and, after being greeted by several priests, made our way in convoy to the Moroka Jabavu stadium where the organisers were to go ahead with some attempt at a funeral. Four bodies arrived for burial, but the police barred our way — none were to be allowed in the stadium — the services must be conducted inside a church with the stated limit of 200 allowed in. The undertakers took the bodies away.

Many hundreds, maybe thousands of people had been turned away (they started arriving at 7.00 am). The streets were lined with angry people and many troops and police — the place was literally rank with them. All through the incident, two helicopters hovered overhead — the combined punch they packed could have wiped out hundreds of people in seconds. The atmosphere was electric, and we all were very frightened.

○

We got out of the cars and listened while a group of priests discussed the matter with police and army officials. A crowd gathered behind us at the entrance to the stadium, and the whole situation became incredibly tense. A policeman casually let off tear-gas into the crowd, and then rocks were thrown from behind us. Several police put their rifles to their shoulders and were only dissuaded from firing into the crowd by the presence of a line of priests, nuns, and members of the Black Sash. I was terrified; facing up to heavily armed soldiers prepared to kill is not the stuff I'm made of.

News came through that a young boy had been shot not far away from us. Nothing further. We still have no idea of his condition.

○

We were forced to return to the church, where a priest told the packed congregation not to be provoked. 'We will fight them, but when we are ready, and with our own weapons. Do not fight them now, only wait, for your time will come.' It was a tremendously emotional moment, the cheer that went up almost blew the roof off the church. The people dispersed slowly, spirits surprisingly high, and the troops followed. They seemed to sense the optimism, the resolve and the solidarity of the crowd, and they became even more aggressive and arrogant.

It wasn't long before tear gas and bullets were fired, making the recent troubles we have had on our university campus look like a tea party.

○

To say that the soldiers do not want to be there, as I have said (and hoped) is really not true, at least from today's experiences. Those soldiers must have been selected, because they were into their 'work' in a big way. Also the whole operation was very well co-ordinated. The helicopters, and the radios, together with the experience of antagonising and provoking they have built up, and the arrogance and confidence that can only come from the possession of infinitely superior weaponry, made a frighteningly efficient exercise of the whole thing.

One of the 27 corpses to be buried was of a 12-year-old boy. He had five bullet wounds in his body — the killer must have had his weapon on automatic, and quite deliberately kept his index finger on the trigger. He could have killed five.

One man came up and cried 'They kill our people, and then won't even let us bury our dead'. A group of women were screaming at the police 'Let them kill us, we are only women'.

○

Any further attempts to bury and mourn the dead will probably have already been thwarted. We hear that some of the bodies, perhaps as many as 12, have already been secretly buried. The relatives have merely been informed of the numbers of the graves. The government is scared of dead children.

○

The behaviour of the priests and the nuns was truely amazing. There must have been 30 or 40 of them. We met about half of them who greeted us with warm handshakes and beaming smiles. When the action started they were roaming all over the placing putting themselves between the people and the guns, wherever trouble looked likely. They were honestly prepared to die to protect and restrain. It made the fear for my own safety just disappear.

One of the 'Sash' women, 71 years old, approached the police and demanded to know what they thought they were doing there. She was warned off, and the officer told her that white and black alike would be shot soon if there was no move to disperse. She started abusing him — we almost had to drag her off.

○

We remained until the crowd dispersed, to let the people know that some white people care enough to stand with them. Doubtless, the trouble continued as the troops and police followed the people into the suburbs. We left to the sound of gunfire, and the smell of tear gas. Soweto is bleeding.

'Ratel' is the pseudonym for a white South African woman.

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MEDIA

CHINA'S PRESS: PARTY-LED OR WEST-FOLLOWING

TWO QUITE DIFFERENT notions of the role of the press are now battling it out in China. Under Deng Xiaoping's modernisation programme, launched in 1978, press reform has meant the growth of a Western-style newspaper culture in the People's Republic. But the Leninist view of the press as one which takes its lead not from events, or 'the people's right to know', but from the Party, still predominates.

The *China Daily*, the Republic's only English-language paper (now published in the UK), exemplifies the trend towards Western journalistic styles. Its appearance five years ago symbolised the effort to restore the credibility of Chinese journalism shattered during the anarchic Cultural Revolution.

Qian Xinbo, the vice chairman and general secretary of the Union of Journalism Societies in China, puts the question facing Chinese journalism today squarely: it is, he says, 'whether the press should serve class struggle or whether it should rather be an unbiased source of information'.

Since preparations for the English-language daily began in 1979, the newspaper has developed an eight-page broadsheet format which is aimed, says Chen Hui, the paper's deputy editor-in-chief, 'to inform foreigners about what is going on in China and also to provide news about what is going on outside so that they [foreigners in China] don't feel cut off'.

The front page is devoted, as in quality British papers, to major domestic and international news but with major non-Chinese events often subordinated to such Chinese topics as the early fulfilment of tree planting quotas. With the assistance of British and American journalists, the former provided by the London-based Thomson Foundation, this imbalanced (to Western eyes) presentation of news is being remedied. The paper now rarely misses a major international story.

The 'Economics and Finance' section of the *China Daily* covers international economic developments as they affect China, as well as news of companies involved in China trade, exchange rates, foreign stock market reports (at present China has no stock market) and gold prices. This page is particularly useful to foreigners when it publishes new economic legislation in translation.

Other inside pages contain national news and editorial opinion. The latter often carries translated excerpts of leaders from other Chinese newspapers, a good measure of the political atmosphere in China.

Surprisingly, the coverage of sports is more comprehensive than that in other English language papers available in the People's Republic of China, including the *International Herald Tribune*, the *South China Morning Post* (Hong Kong) and *The Australian*. One China-watcher attributed this to the Chinese knowing 'foreigners care about their sports'. However, a British embassy official complained that the sports page was too American because it carried baseball results, but not cricket scores.

According to Chen, the *China Daily* was created by a group of journalists 'who realised that a direct translation of the *People's Daily* [the official paper of the Chinese Communist Party] wouldn't work. It had to be a totally different product'.

SINCE IT FIRST appeared in 1980 the *China Daily* has been widely read by foreigners, available as it is at post offices and street-corner newspaper stands. It costs 80p in London — but the equivalent of tuppence in China. Complimentary copies are also available in most hotels in the major cities visited by Westerners.

AMOS PETER GELB

China Daily editors realise that to attract the foreign reader they have to produce a lively, reliable and informative paper. Until now this has made it an exception among the major national Chinese dailies, including the *People's Daily*, which are heavily subsidised by the government. Those subsidies have meant that these newspapers have remained untroubled by their falling circulations and have been under little pressure to improve: it may account for the fact that, according to Chen, two-thirds of the paper's growing readership is Chinese and why, according to another *China Daily* editor, 'only 52 per cent of the people in Beijing believe what they read'.

Like people everywhere, when Chinese readers have a choice between a lacklustre newspaper and a more lively one, they will choose the latter. Given a basic knowledge of English, which is rapidly becoming the second language among Chinese who speak a foreign language, many are turning to the *China Daily* both to improve their English and to enjoy a better newspaper.

This increased popularity has not been without problems. The *China Daily*'s headquarters are located in a borrowed building in the *People's Daily* compound. As the *China Daily*'s position becomes increasingly strong, its landlord is suffering a crisis of readership and relations between the two newspapers are strained. The *People's Daily* has no formal administrative control over the English language newspaper. In a system where work units, factories, schools, or in this case newspapers, are miniature bastions of independent power, it must annoy the *People's Daily* to have no formal control over its lodger.

There are also other causes for the strained relations between the two newspapers. As one East European journalist and longtime Beijing resident explained, 'the old guard party members who staff the *People's Daily* resent the fact that the *China Daily* tends to be more critical of abuses of power by party bureaucrats than their own newspaper'. This is echoed by a Western journalist who adds 'this could cause resentment and problems for the *People's Daily* because if the *China Daily* comes out with something that the *People's Daily* hasn't, the *People's Daily* looks stupid'.

The problem is more complex than just higher standards of journalism in the *China Daily*. If it hopes to retain credibility among its foreign readers, it cannot ignore major stories about China that have already been picked up by the foreign press. However, some stories, such as anti-Japanese demonstrations by Chinese students in Beijing last winter, deal with delicate subjects which the government does not wish to publicise and so does not print in the domestic press. By reporting such events in the *China Daily*, the government is able to acknowledge that the issue exists without more formally admitting to it in the *People's Daily*.

Then there is the question of the nature of the journalists who staff the two newspapers. The *People's Daily* is the party's mouthpiece and its staff tend to believe that the press should be a political weapon. The *China Daily* on the other hand is staffed by younger journalists, some of whom have had foreign training. The editor-in-chief, Fen Xiliang, graduated from the prestigious University of Missouri School of Journalism in the United States. Many of the journalists at the *China Daily* are members of the disillusioned post-Cultural-Revolution generation for whom the political ideals of their predecessors have lost much of their gloss. They are becoming increasingly concerned with journalistic standards and many are unhappy about the political restraints that remain on the party-led press. In addition, the presence of the Western journalists on the staff of the *China Daily* clearly exerts some influence on the younger Chinese journalists.

For all that the *China Daily* is the image of China that the Chinese wish foreigners to have. Chen, the deputy editor-in-chief, had little journalistic experience when he was seconded to his job from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. One *China Daily* journalist suggested that his job was to guarantee that stories did not conflict with official foreign policy. A story on the Chernobyl disaster was held up for fear that it might sour a visit by a Soviet delegation. Nothing critical of the central government or government policy is allowed to appear.

Qian of the Union of Journalism Societies admits that the question of the future direction of the press — the *China Daily* as well as all other newspapers — is as yet 'unanswered'. Much hinges on the aging leader, Deng Xiaoping. It may be that the longer he holds the reins the more the modernising elements in Chinese journalism will miss him when he finally goes. □

Amos Gelb worked for 6 months in Beijing on the China Daily.

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THE HEAVY BURDEN ON THE WORLD'S BACK

SO WHAT ARE the prospects for a new agreement to give growth a boost, and hope to at least some of the 31 million unemployed in the industrialised countries? The story starts in America.

Most private economists expect the US economy to grow by around 3 per cent next year. Consumer price inflation was at a 37-year low for the first seven months of this year. But a recent meeting of State Governors decided that 31 of the 50 states are in recession. The Joint Economic Committee of Congress says that it is only the Pacific and Atlantic Coast economies which are growing.

The Midwest is still being hit by imports, the farmbelt is suffering closures and emigration, and the South has been hit by the gloomy outlook for the oil companies.

The main worry is that despite the recent devaluation in the dollar imports are still eating into US growth. US Trade Representative Mr Clayton Yeutter warned earlier this month that the trade deficit will probably not start improving until sometime next year and even then the correction 'will not be as solid as we want'.

Surging imports have sapped the strength of the US economy and led to fears of recession. This is worrying enough in itself but it would come with an enormous burden of debt. (Imagine the US economy as a car worker sacked with an enormous mortgage to finance.)

The Federal Government's budget deficit continues to grow despite brave resolutions in Congress. If the US economy did move into recession the overhanging debt would severely limit the government's ability to pull the economy back up.

Lower economic activity would mean lower tax revenues, increased social security payments, and a lower US credit rating with foreign investors. The intractable problems that the deficits pose at the moment would turn into a nightmare.

Politicians in Washington are making strenuous efforts to curtail the growth of the Federal deficit. But US Treasury Secretary James Baker has made it clear that he does not think that the US economy can be shored up by Washington alone. Baker wants the other leading industrialised countries, particularly Japan and West Germany, to expand demand. This would help to bring the US trade deficit under control because they would pull in more imports. It would also give world growth a kick. Both would help steer the US away from recession.

At first sight it looks as if Baker will have some success with Japan.

The yen's 51 per cent rise against the dollar this year has severely hit Japanese growth. The Japanese economy contracted by 0.5 per cent in the first three months of this year, the worst performance for 11 years. Japanese male unemployment has risen to 3.1 per cent, the highest level since the figures were started in 1953. Over the year it looks as though growth will be less than half last year's 4.5 per cent.

This autumn the government will introduce a special $13bn budget to boost demand. However it is unlikely this will do much good for the US exporters. Most of the extra demand will come in the form of public works and construction which have a very low import content.

Even with the yen's appreciation which should make Japanese exports more expensive, Japan is still running an enormous trade surplus with the US. In July Japan's trade surplus stood at $867bn, exports had risen by 22 per cent and imports by just 1.6 per cent over the month. Japanese companies are cutting their profit margins to keep their prices down and maintain market share in the US.

CHARLES LEADBEATER

On top of this there is a more fundamental problem. 'Regardless of all these exchange rate movements it is not at all clear that American manufacturers make the kind of goods that Japanese consumers want to buy', says David Morrison, Chief International economist with the US finance house Goldmann Sachs.

FINANCE MINISTERS from the leading industrialised countries will meet in Washington next week against a gloomy backdrop.

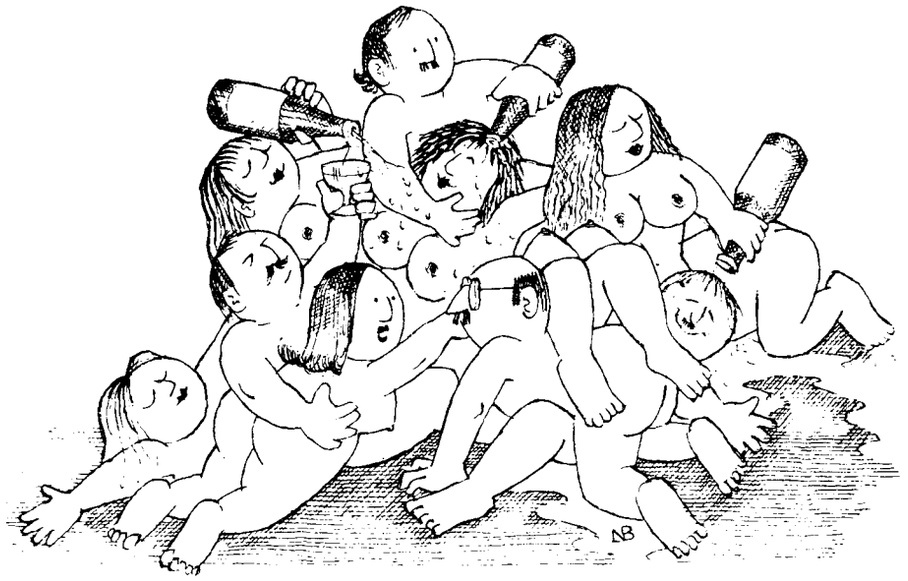
Last week was one of the worst in Wall Street's history: the Dow Jones Industrial Average shed 140 points, enough to knock 7.4 per cent off the value of American companies. The falls in New York quickly fed through to markets in London, Frankfurt and Tokyo. But the stock market falls are just the spice.

Lower oil prices are yet to deliver their promised boost to world growth.

The oil sectors of the advanced economies have cut back far more quickly than the non-oil sectors have expanded: Dallas and Aberdeen have seen more closures than Michigan and the West Midlands have seen new hirings. And the oil producing countries have cut their demand far more quickly than demand elsewhere has risen.

The agonising wait for the boost from lower oil prices would be easier to bear if it were not for a second, much more important problem hanging over the world economy: the terrifying twins — the US Federal and trade deficits.

The Finance Ministers will not just be assessing the dangers posed by the deficits but their own inability to curb them. A year ago this Sunday in an historic meeting in the Plaza Hotel in New York, Finance Ministers agreed to act together to try to curb the enormous trade deficit by jointly engineering a fall in the dollar. A lower dollar makes imports into the US relatively more expensive, and American exports more competitive. In a separate but related move, the US, West Germany and Japan agreed to a co-ordinated round of interest rate cuts in an attempt to



"Hello, Peter. Do you remember me? I have a dog. Do you still have a dog, Peter?"

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maintain some momentum behind world growth.

Both initiatives have only half succeeded. The dollar has fallen by around 30 per cent against the major currencies this year. But despite this US consumers show no sign of turning from foreign to domestic goods: the trade deficit looks set to rise from $150bn last year to $170bn this.

The second arm of the strategy has led to interest rate cuts round the world. But of late this joint effort has run out of steam, chiefly due to a stubborn lack of enthusiasm in Bonn. Far from boosting world growth the International Monetary Fund has had to cut its estimates for world growth, to 2.8 per cent this year, and 3 per cent in 1987, down from the 3 per cent and 3.2 per cent respectively it forecast in April.

IF THE JAPANESE are agreeable but ineffective partners in Baker's efforts to steer the US economy away from a mess, the West Germans will be an entirely different kettle of fish.

Economic policymakers in Bonn clearly regard Reaganomics as a big mistake: they are in no mood to be lectured by profligate Americans on how to run their economy. The IMF expects West German growth to remain strong at around 3 per cent this year. The government has committed itself to a series of tax-cutting budgets which should maintain a healthy growth rate. The Deutschmark has risen by 50 per cent against the dollar. Though the trade surplus looks set to top DM 100bn this year the West Germans claim that in real terms imports are rising far faster than exports.

The West Germans seem likely to give Mr Baker a simple short message: 'We are doing as much as we can. Why should we risk overheating our economy, endangering our zero inflation rate for the sake of getting you spendthrifts out of a hole? Sort out your own problems.'

The Deutschmark is pushing the upper limits of its range in the European Monetary System — so Bonn may be persuaded to cut interest rates to ease the currency down. But it is unlikely there will be any enormous fiscal stimulus.

The upshot of all this could be a choice between three unpalatable options. First the tide of imports flooding into the US could be stemmed by a sharp devaluation of the dollar. But this would be bad for inflation and stock market nerves because imports will become more expensive. And even then there is no guarantee that the devaluation will be successful. The trade deficit could still carry on climbing, US companies which trade internationally would still suffer, and pressure would grow for Washington to take direct action to stem the imports by erecting tariff barriers. The atmosphere of collaboration which emerged from the revolving doors of the Plaza Hotel last year could disintegrate into protectionism, recrimination and retaliation.

The third and most likely outcome is that the Finance Ministers will agree to try to muddle on, and the world economy will continue to limp along. As long as inflation remains low it could tread water for some time to come. But when it eventually sinks it will have a very heavy weight on its back. □

No. 5: The Professionals

THIS WEEK's guide to penetrative politics is for the professionals, so amateur entrists please sit at the back.

Here's one for the politically promiscuous, the seekers out of strange bedfellows. Which organisation shares the favours of the Kinnocks *and* Terry Fields, David Owen *and* Sid Bidwell, Friend of Palestine Ernie Ross — *and* ex-co-chair of Poale Zion Maurice Miller, Gwyneth Dunwoody *and* Chris Smith?

The clue is that any bed they're sharing *shouldn't* be a pay bed, since they're all members of the Socialist Health Association. They've even overlooked the Cold War and retained Communists in membership, which is 'open to all Socialists'! This is intravenous entrism. So *where* have you all been?

Despite your absences, the SHA reports a steady growth of membership to over 2,000, and is as happily unelitist professionally as it is politically. Anyone who's interested in health, which is every last hypochondriac one of us, may join.

It started as the State Medical Association back in the heady days when Lloyd George was busily pinching Bismarck's ideas on social welfare and passing them off as revolutionary. The torch was passed to the boldly Socialist Medical Association in 1930 when it affiliated to the Labour Party. Within two years, in 1932, a Conference resolution was successfully moved establishing the NHS as Labour Party policy.

Ever forward-minded, it became the Socialist Health Association and its 25 branches expanded its work to campaign vigorously on preventative health care. Its members are active in community health, and helped in the Wendy Savage campaign.

It is surely a coincidence that the 500 minimum membership proposed for affiliate Societies lets in the Party's wigged wing — just. The Society of Labour Lawyers has just over the half-grand, mostly solicitors and barristers in equal proportions, with a refresher of lay magistrates. Since membership is restricted to those categories or to law students, Conrad Ascher, SLL secretary, isn't worried about takeovers.

The Society was set up in 1948, when the initial glaciation of the Cold War persuaded some people that the Haldane Society had fallen under undue Communist influence. So Labour Party membership is a requirement. Its provincial branches are co-terminous with LP regions but, while affiliated to some constituencies, in general the policy is not to scrutinise the small print of party life, rather to help formulate policy on legal matters. It helps that around 20 MPs are usually members. In fact, Conrad Ascher points out, there aren't nearly as many PLP lawyers as people imagine. If MPs are called to the Bar, it's the Strangers' rather than the Bailey.

Credits claimed include the setting up of the Law Commission, and of the neighbourhood Law Centres. At present there are committees working on individuals' legal rights and on a socialist policy for crime prevention. The delegate to Party Conference is mandated on the choice of NEC representative for the societies, but otherwise has a free hand to wield their block vote according to conscience — and law, of course.

In contrast to the whiff of elitism which surrounds even the most progressive legal establishment, the Socialist Educational Association is open to anyone interested in education, and claims as its biggest achievement Comprehensive Education, which it mooted back in 1931. An article in its latest magazine gives ammunition to the Selectivists by consistently mis-referring to the 'proletariat', but the SEA does campaign for higher standards, both of education and accountability in our schools. Challenging the dictatorial powers of the Head, it engages in subversive plots to make school governors do their work effectively, opposes corporal punishment, and seeks to establish tertiary colleges in place of sixth forms.

Finally, what of the adventurers who set up the National Association of Labour Teachers in 1927, just after the General Strike, when a pink-tinged pedagogue wasn't enhancing career prospects at all?

Although they first moved Comprehensive Education, they fought a tenacious battle to get the party to accept it, scoring partial victories in 1944 and again in 1951. But it was when they began to apply comprehensive principles to membership in 1979 that they began to grow, from around 500 to over 2,000. They opened up to interested non-teachers, and now a majority of members are Governors, councillors, or FE lecturers.

Like the other societies they've altered their rules to make sure that the 58 branches are active and not just platforms for persons of ill intent to get to CLPs. Each branch tends to affiliate to five or six CLPs and Comrades have sometimes confused the class room with the class struggle, to get to the white heat of the reselection conference. But Graham Lane, the secretary, seems confident that the entry-proofing will work, leaving the SEA to send frissons down Kenneth Baker's spine.

Ian Williams

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ART

The mysterious affair of the stolen bicycle

John Spurling

Je Suis le Cahier: Sketchbooks of Picasso
RA

MODERN ART is a kind of mystery cult. That has been a considerable part of its attraction for its devotees as well as of its repugnancy to outsiders. The artists themselves may not have set out to create a mystery, but their formal and technical concerns and their reaction against the academic obviousness of their traditional predecessors have naturally had that effect, while the exploitation of the mystery, its unravelling, exegesis, history and hagiography have occupied and supported a host —or, better say, a parasite — of non-artists.

The latest apotheosis of Picasso, the cult's major deity, is an exhibition of his sketchbooks accompanied by an expensive book (Thames and Hudson £36, or Royal Academy £16.90 paperback) illustrating and commenting on a selection of the contents, with a brief catalogue raisonné of all 175 sketchbooks. Forty-five of them are included in the exhibition, which was first shown in New York earlier this year. For devotees this is an exciting opportunity to approach the mystery for the first time at its very source, but for agnostics without some knowledge of the master's major works, these little bits and pieces on their own may well seem disappointingly trivial.

The book, however, once one has got over the adulatory, almost salivatory tone of some of its contributors, is an indispensable part of the event. It illustrates sketches which cannot be seen at the RA because they are still bound up in the notebooks and it gives the detailed context of several of the most significant sequences of drawings, including those connected with important paintings, such as *The Family of Saltimbanques* and *Les Demoiselles d'Avignon*, or crucial periods of Picasso's life such as his love affair with Marie-Thérèse Walter or his gloomy retirement to Royan at the start of the Second World War. Consider, for example, the two *Rape of the Sabines* sketchbooks, dating from autumn 1962.

In 1945 Dora Maar, the successor to Marie-Thérèse, was being treated for mental disturbance and was

> found by a policeman wandering along the quay near the Pont Neuf (with her hair dishevelled and her clothes torn). She told him she had been attacked by a man who stole her bicycle . . . the bicycle was found, apparently untouched, right near the spot where she claimed to have been attacked.

Picasso's view was that 'she was looking for sympathy, feeling that maybe I wasn't so much interested in her as I had been'. Sketchbooks 162 and 164 were made at a time when Picasso was occupied with his own version of three famous paintings of classical violence by Poussin and David. They bring together many variants of the Dora Maar episode — sometimes the woman beside the crashed bike is attacked, sometimes tenderly assisted by the man, who is usually an antique figure with a Roman sword and sandals — with motifs of battle and rape in a classical setting as well as the screaming woman's head from *Guernica*. The drawings are plain and bold, mostly without shading, in strongly emotional, flowing pencil lines. Both notebooks were filled in the course of ten days at the time of the Cuban Missile Crisis.

Archetypal Picasso image (left) from 1956; from 1922 (right) a more surprising sketch from that protean draughtsman

Here, then, in this conflation of autobiographical, art-historical and contemporary political themes, is a solution to part of the Picasso mystery: his arcane subject-matter. The other part of the mystery is a matter of form rather than content. To put it crudely, why did such a traditionally skilled artist (he boasted that as a child he could draw like Raphael) put his skills through such strange and difficult contortions? Sketchbook 59 helps to answer the question. It was made in 1916 and alternates delicately clarified Cubist drawings of a woman seated in an armchair with naturalistic drawings of Harlequin — some in a simple, shorthand style, others more carefully and sensitively drawn — in preparation for Picasso's collaboration with Diaghilev on the ballet *Parade*. In amongst the two main motifs are drawings of a hand, a nude woman and a sugar-bowl, which Ingres would have recognised immediately as those of a worthy successor, and three different views of a bowl of fruit in a crisp, chunky, post-Cézanne style which might have given Ingres more pause. Picasso, in other words, is not so much abandoning Cubism or re-embracing naturalism as pursuing subjects in the form in which they temporarily excite his interest and perhaps assessing the virtues and limitations of each. 'When you do a head,' he said to a fellow artist,

> you must draw like that head. Ingres drew like Ingres and not like the things he drew. Take a

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tree, for example. At the foot of the tree is a goat and minding the goat, a girl. Well, you need a different sort of drawing for each. The goat is round, the girl is square, the tree is a tree. But you use the same kind of drawing for all three. That's what's wrong. For each one you need a different sort of drawing.

This looks like the heart of Picasso's mystery. He set himself the Herculean, Borgesian task of drawing every object and even every part of every object differently so as to capture more of their nature and less of his own. The sketchbooks are the running domestic diary of this epic contest with life and art and its inevitable failure. In the end Picasso could only draw like Picasso. □

TELEVISION

Set pieces

Peter Hillmore

IT MAY INTEREST you to know, in the post-industrial modern age, that the penguin is the most liberated creature on the planet. Not the most intelligent, mind you — **Birds for All Seasons** (BBC2) showed them behaving pretty stupidly — just the most emancipated.

It seems that the male penguin is more than happy to incubate the eggs for three weeks in a special hairless pouch in its body. This enables the female to lead a full life doing exactly what she wants, like leaping into the water and stealing stones from her sisters' nests, until she takes the egg over just for the last few days.

It's unlikely, therefore, that the penguins of Antarctica will have much truck with the current obsession pre-occupying the television doctors: can male humans be equipped with a special hairless pouch so that they can incubate an egg for nine months, thus allowing women to go and work down a mine or in the pleasant, lively and intellectually stimulating atmosphere of a steel foundry. A couple of months ago, ITV, in the shape of Miriam Stoppard, was agonising over this problem and concluded that, while it was medically possible, there 'were still a lot of questions to be answered'. Last week, the BBC's **Bodymatters** addressed itself to the same medical and ethical question and also concluded that it posed a serious problem. There was no obvious reason why television should return to the same topic, no new evidence, no sign of any breakthrough in medical knowledge. While a newspaper would have junked an idea if it was exhaustively covered by an immediate rival, television, with its long lead time into programmes, can't do this: the rigid schedules are drawn up too far in advance. Still, given *Bodymatters'* predilection for having the presenters in a set designed like the part of the body under discussion, I was surprised they didn't at least ring the changes by having them address us from a hairless pouch.

A lot of thought had obviously gone into the set design in which Jonathan Dimbleby introduced the first edition of **This Week**, the Thursday night current affairs programme from Thames which replaces Thames' Thursday night current affairs programme *TV Eye*. But I'm not sure that the gimmick of having Mr Dimbleby sitting in front of an empty newsroom, surrounded by vacant desks covered with newspapers, typewriters and phones, was a terribly good one. It was obviously designed to give the impression of a programme that never sleeps, a caged tiger ready to react, but it gave Mr Dimbleby a rather forlorn look and made him resemble someone who had wandered into the office and was playing at being a presenter when no one was looking. But, with introduction of new staff (many poached from *Panorama*), the 'new' programme got off to a good start with Peter Gill's depressing film about intimidation in Ulster. I wouldn't have thought it possible to make another programme about events in Northern Ireland that didn't tell us details we knew already, or thought we did, but Mr Gill managed it. The image of a father trying to describe and comprehend the body of his son after he'd been murdered ('His face just wasn't there any more') was very moving. As was **Dirk Bogarde** when he talked to Russell Harty on LWT (has Mr Harty left the BBC, or was he just moonlighting?). Mr Bogarde, too, was trying to comprehend and describe the incomprehensible, as he recounted his memories of seeing a concentration camp in the last war. He gave a familiar horror a new dimension when he talked of a survivor, her breasts 'like empty purses', begging him not for food but for the newspaper it was wrapped in as she'd had no contact with the outside world for longer than she'd had no food.

The designers of the *This Week* set could well have copied the designers of the newscaster's set in **Spitting Image**'s special show made for the American market. The newsman was seated in front of a row of washing machines in a launderette. The programme was not as vicious as the ones made for us sophisticated Brits (it seems that the American producers kept turning up at the studios when the 'special' was being made and vetoing sketches and language) but it still had more bite than most American shows. It was introduced by a Dimbleby-like figure, David Frost, who had to appear in person because even Fluck and Law couldn't make a puppet which managed to leer without even opening its mouth.

The set designer also had a prominent part to play in the opening episode of John Mortimer's mammoth **Paradise Postponed**, Thames' entrant for the prestige drama stakes and designed to atone for weeks of trash like *Return to Eden*. An old copy of the *New Statesman*, going back to the days when it had 'The Nation' on its masthead as well, was even used not only to denote the period but also to present the Reverend Simeon Simcock as a decent chap with civilised left-wing sensibilities.

Right from the start of this 11-week epic, it's clear that no expense account has been spared in presenting a pageant of everything green, red and blue in England's pleasant land. Michael Hordern (or 'Sir Michael Hordern' as the trailers days earlier kept proudly boasting) seems to be the linking figure in the pageant, as the Canon Collins-like eccentric; there's also a crotchety, old agnostic who's also the local doctor, a local poacher, a band of Hooray Henries, all the people that you are likely to meet in your local neighbourhood drama. It's beautiful to watch and a joy to listen to, but we'll really have to wait for the plot to develop — the first 90 minutes were really just laying the groundwork — to pass judgment on anything □

Hugo Williams will be back next week.

CINEMA

Dirty trix department

Adam Mars-Jones

Rollie Tyler (Bryan Brown, right) demonstrates in *FX* the model he made for 'I Dismember Mama'

FX — Murder by Illusion (15)
Leicester Square Theatre
Poltergeist II — The Other Side (15)
Plaza

ONE OF THE LEADING characters in **FX — Murder by Illusion**, an actress, claims to have a grudge against the hegemony of special effects in current American films. 'Nobody cares about making movies about people any more,' she grumbles. Her complaint bears the

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same relationship to the film in which it occurs as the phrase 'You've been watching too many movies' does to an outrageous plot development. It is a protest that functions as a permission.

Hollywood is forever recycling itself these days and it was only a matter of time before special-effects had their turn in the mincer. But it is ironic how thoroughly the world of special-effects needs to be misrepresented before it can be used as the basis of a movie. For one thing, it has to be treated as a solitary art, a matter of one man and his visions, rather than an industry within an industry. Rollie Tyler (Bryan Brown) has a workshop, but it has the atmosphere of an atelier and he can apparently provide all the gadgets that a major film requires from a single van.

More importantly, the film needs to pretend that special-effects (as opposed to stunts) take place in real space and real time. In fact, animations, projections and models are the bases of the work. Only after editing does everything come together. The heroine's eyeball-rolling reaction-shot expresses her horror at a dwarf of mucus that had yet to be built on the day she rolled her eyes so finely.

It's easiest to make effects convincing — particularly when they're done with elaborate hydraulics — by way of short takes and close-ups. A case in point was *Alien* (1979), where the viewer was unable satisfactorily to place the glimpsed alien in the rest of the scene and so shared the characters' panicky uncertainty. (The same dread, caused by the same technical difficulty of showing effects in long shot or sustained takes, lingered damagingly in Ridley Scott's subsequent *Legend*.) A *tour de force* like the recent sequel *Aliens* used big bucks and massed computers to give the effects a more sustained life. It used to be said that Mickey Mouse was a more expensive star even than Garbo. Now it is likely that the Queen Alien — even without an agent — costs more than Sigourney Weaver.

FX isn't about special-effects in that sense. Its hero is called upon to be more like a stuntman with a bag of tricks. Towards the end, as he attacks a well-defended house with little more than a handful of radio-controlled gadgets and some reflective plastic, he seems like a cross between a commando and a conjuror at a children's party.

The plot is as follows. A special-effects expert is hired by the Justice Department to fake the assassination of a mobster who is willing to testify against the Mafia so long as he can start a new life elsewhere. After the faked murder, the hero finds that his employers wish to kill him and goes on the run. The whole world is against him; on his side are only his spunky assistant Andy (Martha Gehman) and the smoke-pots he used to such good effect in 'Hell Raisers'.

The result is a satisfactory thriller, with some good action sequences. At one disconcerting moment, for instance, a baddie whose hands are tied behind his back jumps high in the air and brings his hands swiftly to the front of his body while his legs are tucked out of the way. Bryan Brown breathes well as the hero, particularly when nerving himself to commit the fake murder, and also in a prolonged scene of getting his breath back after some real violence.

One of the hardest things to do these days is to tie off a *film-noir* plot; we have been spoiled by recent history as well as recent cinema, so that any conspiracy that stops short of the President seems somehow trivial and disappointing. At the same time, constantly pinning blame on the White House or the Pentagon gets to be boring. *FX* locates its conspiracy at medium-level, inside the Justice Department, but makes amends with a plot twist. The hero and the honest cop get together at the last minute to steal the Mafia money that the plot was all about. This makes nonsense of their previous characters, of course; but then the actress who lamented the passing of 'movies about people' only lasted a few minutes of screen time before she was crisply shot, her carping voice silenced for ever.

Poltergeist II — The Other Side is an inferior sequel to a film that was itself no great peak of cinematic art. The special effects required the efforts of over a hundred technicians every day; so much for Rollie Tyler's studio with its modest trays of eyeballs and severed ears. Some of the effects are impressive. In one inventive sequence a boy's dental brace goes haywire, shooting out filaments in all directions and covering him with a thick net of metal. At another stage a man is briefly possessed by the worm at the bottom of a bottle of tequila (we have seen the worm opening a bright, beady eye).

But potential viewers should also be warned that there is a moment when the family, drifting separated through a sort of psychic limbo, link up with each other and the screen glows pink; and an equally stomach-churning sequence in which the little girl is protected and returned to her parents by a swarm of stars, who reveal themselves as her angel of a grandmother. □

This is Adam Mars-Jones' last week as our cinema columnist. Judith Williamson will be starting next week.

THEATRE

Man about town

Paul Allen

Archangels Don't Play Pinball
DARIO FO *Bristol Old Vic*

DARIO FO WAS the most performed playwright on the Edinburgh Festival Fringe this year (or so the Assembly Rooms press office claimed and few of us could face the research needed to contradict it). This is a remarkable achievement for a man who has had a successful run in the West End, even if his radical farce *Accidental Death of an Anarchist* did make it to London on the back of a fringe company. This week there are productions of Fo plays at three very 'official' theatres: the Lyceum in Edinburgh itself, Glasgow and the staid and stately (till now) Bristol Old Vic.

Why? The British theatre on both sides of the false divide between 'official' and fringe is currently hungry for the kind of product which will bring in large audiences without intellectually or morally embarrassing theatre directors — the politics is a more complex matter. A return to the concept of radical chic would be welcome, or, failing that, a continued boom in what John Godber calls 'serious populism'. Dario Fo, an ex-Communist who has settled into a leftish anarchic individualism, is more exuberant and more of a star performer: he can fill a football stadium for a personal appearance. To our beleaguered theatre managers he must seem like an irresistible mixture of Alan Ayckbourn, Ken Dodd and Ben Elton.

But *Archangels Don't Play Pinball* turns out not only to have next to no radical content but to be rather inefficient at building its laughs. The glory of farce is the way seeds scattered throughout the play grow quite naturally but unobtrusively into grenades exploding under the sensitive parts of the principal characters. This is too obviously a first play. It is constructed in a series of self-contained episodes in which jokes go from seed to puff-of-smoke in minutes; they cannot grow, nothing is unexpected and the audience cannot give in helplessly to the developing control of the play.

There is a perfunctory overall framework to the play: Roger Rees, the new associate director at the Old Vic, plays Lofty, the apparently stupid butt of the gang of petty criminals he knocks around with. After defrauding a pastry-cook (Lofty pretends he's been poisoned by a cream puff full of chemicals and the shopkeeper gives the gang money to go away) they trick Lofty into believing he's married a prostitute. The couple fall in love, and their subsequent Odyssey involves him, among other things, in impersonating a cabinet minister and then a dog.

All this is in the zany tradition of Italian comedy (I promise not to get earnest about commedia dell' arte) allowing only glancing references to themes that later plays tell us are important to Fo: the way an innocent fool can subvert the criminally powerful; the way a structured society pays more attention to a man's clothes and office than to the man (it's rarely a woman); the way the aspirations of the humble are cynically manipulated by rulers, be they large food companies or God himself (hence the title).

But these points are thinly made and highly generalised, a reminder that it's when he attacks specific targets that Fo becomes dangerous and much funnier. I'm thinking of the terror of supposedly socialist men when their wives strike against the supermarkets in *Can't Pay? Won't Pay!* Or the sense of all order slipping away in *Accidental Death of an Anarchist* when we realise that the buffoon exposing the police as murderers owes allegiance to nobody.

Archangels Don't Play Pinball also labours with a translation which just misses an English vernacular fluency, but it's an immense relief to find that Glen Walford's production does not rely on the belief that Italians are

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intrinsically funny. Instead it offers the most sustained attempt I remember since seeing Lauri Lupino Lane in pantomime to recreate the relentless precision and energy of slapstick farce. The precision wasn't yet there when I attended the second preview, and the moving around of Claire Lyth's clever set was taking much too long, but the energy and ambition carried much before them. There is no reason why the autocratic little official at a municipal pound should end up with each foot in a bucket of dogshit but it's undeniably fun when he does. Roger Rees in particular strives too visibly to achieve his effects, but Christopher Ettridge's characteristic air of suppressed hysteria brings a naturalness to the clowning that promises well.

The British premiere launches a new regime at the Old Vic under Leon Rubin, previously at Watford. A new play by Mary O'Malley about Catholicism and the Devil is in the offing, and a Tom Stoppard adaptation of Vaclav Havel. These may prove more of a challenge to audiences used to a mixture of West End fare and classics. *Archangels Don't Play Pinball*, though, will reassure them, except that they may wonder what the fuss was about. As for serious populism in the repertory theatres, there is always Alan Bleasdale, or Willy Russell and Ayckbourn — and they can even provide decent parts for women. □

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MUSIC

Northern lights

Andrew Clements

Scandinavia's music festivals are now among the best in Europe

THE COSMOPOLITAN and well-heeled concert goer has traditionally looked to middle Europe to provide holiday sustenance: the route from Bayreuth to Salzburg, with occasional diversions to Munich and Vienna, is well trodden. Recently, too, southern France has offered an attractive combination of opera, good food and a reliable climate: Orange, Avignon and Aix-en-Provence have managed to put together first-class festivals in wonderful surroundings.

At all these venues, at a price, a certain quality of music-making is assured: performers and performances are out of the normal run, concerts are more than simple reprises of the winter-season programmes from the European capitals. But the explosion of festivals in Scandinavia over the last decade has been more or less ignored by the international audience; the realisation is only gradually seeping through that Finland and Sweden now offer musical fare that is quite up to the standard of their more southerly counterparts.

Returning from Scandinavia is enough to induce a severe bout of Anglophobia at the best of times; coming back from festivals there, to the summer circuit in Britain, only doubles the dose. Britain's festival expansion now seems to have passed its peak; the urge for every borough with cultural pretensions to cobble together a programme of events and call it a festival has subsided and the old faithfuls remain, though nearly all diminished in vigour. Aldeburgh has lost a great deal of its *raison d'être* since Britten's death; Cheltenham appears stuck in the 1950s; Bath and Brighton struggle each year to find a profile; while Edinburgh continues to trade off its reputation of the last 25 years. (This paper has dealt handsomely with many aspects of the Edinburgh Festival this year and I've no wish to take up more space, except to observe, *pace* Angus Calder [*NS* 5 September], that, musically at least, it was the most ordinary festival there I've ever had the misfortune to attend.)

It's hardly surprising, then, that encountering two events in Finland, both established for more than ten years, in which the enthusiasm and flair of the planners and the verve of the performers still appear unbounded, should seem so invigorating. It's not just that everyone seems totally involved in what they're doing and is courteous and helpful — though that helps a good deal — but that audiences seem much closer to the organisation and become that much more involved in the music-making.

In one case — at Kuhmo, a small town in eastern central Finland — the performers are a

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good proportion of the audience; for the fortnight of chamber music that brings big name instrumentalists to this most unlikely festival setting induces an extraordinary community spirit, where students and established performers meet on equal terms and *ad hoc* ensembles spring up for impromptu concerts which go on into the early hours. The Lockenhaus Festival in Austria is, I'm told, similar, but there is nothing in Britain to match the single-mindedness and exceptional quality of Kuhmo: the nearest I would guess to have been the old-style Aldeburgh, when Britten was able to persuade his friends to come to Suffolk for similarly relaxed and spontaneous music-making.

Certainly there is nothing here equivalent to the opera festival at Savonlinna, where the season of opera performances in the castle is the one Scandinavian festival beginning to acquire all the trappings of internationalism. Again, though, there is none of the snobbery and élitism that disfigures much British opera and disfigures Bayreuth and Salzburg even more: ticket prices, by Finnish standards, are extremely reasonable and performances are family occasions. Heads don't snap round when a small child squeals or has to be carried out in the middle of an act, while formal evening dress seems non-existent.

At Drottningholm, the exquisite and perfectly preserved 18th-century theatre in the grounds of the palace of the Swedish royal family, a few miles from the centre of Stockholm, tickets for the opera productions are also well within the reach of normal opera lovers, while the style and standard of performance are totally exceptional. Nowhere in the world stages Mozart opera with such historical fidelity or manages to preserve the thrill of real theatricality so intensely.

All of these festivals receive state subsidies, though the amounts involved are not enormous by British standards and pale against the funds available for the arts in West Germany and Austria. Neither Savonlinna nor Drottningholm squanders its resources on expensive foreign-based singers, yet the standard of performance is commendably high — and Savonlinna pursues commerical sponsorship, too, with great success. What both opera festivals and Kuhmo have in common, and how they differ significantly from almost all their British counterparts, is in their single-mindedness. Kuhmo concentrates entirely on chamber music and has resisted the temptation to divert its energies into other areas; the focus at Savonlinna is firmly fixed on the opera performances. It's surely significant that the one British festival which has consistently maintained its standards over more than 30 years is the one that is similarly monothematic — Glyndebourne, whatever one feels about its elitism, still sustains small-house opera productions of the highest quality — and that the two festivals which have become firmly established in the last ten years here, Huddersfield and the Almeida, have both been exclusively contemporary-music events. By diversifying frantically in an effort to attract new audiences, the traditional festivals are now spreading their resources and imagination too thinly to compete with the best on offer overseas. □

A show too far

Naseem Khan

NO ONE WITH the least bit of vision could have failed to raise a cheer for Magdalena. It was a visionary project: 30 women from 17 countries, all of them working in experimental theatre, gathered together for three weeks to work, perform and experiment. At the least it promised a demonstration of work that had been little seen here; at the most a collaborative exploration of what it is that women — particularly, peculiarly — can offer the arts. Given that the possibilities were so heady it's little wonder that Magdalena's cardinal fault was over-ambition.

It all began with great sense. Jill Greenhalgh — a long-term member of Cardiff's Laboratory Theatre and the conceivor of Magdalena '86 — had structured the festival in two distinct parts. First came a week of intensive public performances and workshops, at Cardiff's Chapter Arts Centre, by the 30 women. Wide-ranging in style, from naturalistic to 'daemonic', these attracted a huge audience. Although there were critical voices raised at the open meeting called to assess Phase I's success (why were there no black women? why were men allowed in? why was the traditional format of lit, active performers and darkened, passive spectators — held by some to be male and authoritarian — maintained?), the mood was excited, stimulated and supportive. After all, nothing like this had ever been seen before (either in Cardiff or outside). If the project had ended there, it would have been counted an unqualified success. But it didn't.

When Phase I ended, Phase II began: two private weeks of collaborative work due to culminate in a performance. It would, declared the background paper, 'allow a unique opportunity for a wealth of women's creative and cultural knowledge to be shared and integrated into a single event'. This should have rung all sorts of alarm bells. It is hard enough, after all, to integrate the experiences of one single homogeneous group into a single, experimental work. How much harder to do so where there is no common working method, no common language, and in two weeks.

The Final Event that emerged had, predictably, a troubled history. 'This has been a real piece of grit,' admitted Gilly Adams, member of Magdalena's Advisory Group. 'It's created a tension, a conflict.' Outside expectations were high; time was short; pressures rose. When, finally, the decision was made not to charge for the Event and to return all the money taken, it relieved some of the tension. But, truth to tell, the women would have been much better off without it at all.

It *began* promisingly enough. Staged in the old Edward England potato warehouse, it first of all drew its audience down to a nearby industrial stream, where a sturdy woman was found washing and thumping her clothes. The audience was then led, in the wake of a mute, distraught girl in white, back to the old warehouse. On the short way back, singing cries passing back and forth between performers — at the stream, by the building, at upper windows — linked them movingly in a tangible bond of unity. The moment had a rhythmical sureness that, unfortunately, was not refound.

The next part took place in a cold and rather grubby garage, a long section (some of the show, I later discovered, was drawn from Susan Griffin's *Women in Nature: the Roaring Inside*) starting off with an archetypal separation: one infant princess is sent by invading soldiers to the passionate south, the other to the chilly north. The women mimed this, and its more obscure development, to a spoken narrative. From there the audience was led into another room: long and dimly lit, with a shallow channel of water running down the middle and a built-up platform of wet sand on each side. The audience stood on one bank watching events — elliptical, separate, abstract — take place on the other side. The work was uneven and the connections unclear. For, while the performers are clearly women who deserve attention, the combination of their talents had oddly little sense of interaction, or even of the dangers of collision.

The women had been determined to work collectively, without a director and the idea of male authority contained in such a person. Like any effort at consensus management, it had created problems. (That sharp little book from Comedia, *What a Way to Run a Railroad* by Charles Landry, David Morley, Russell Southwood and Patrick Wright, reviewed in *NS* 10 Jan. '86, details many of them). Some had found the exercise wonderfully supportive; others thought that it had encouraged blandness and an avoidance of conflict: 'A happy little island where only happens good things,' one scathingly described it. An attempt by one woman, during rehearsal, to introduce a critical 'directorial' eye created a furore. The event (if it had to happen) certainly needed one, to break down the quality of self-absorption in the presentation. But that is the tyranny of the short cut, the instant art work. The fact of a Final Event might, as some suggested, have persuaded funding bodies to give the project money. But it wasn't worth the hassle and it undermined the achievements of Phase I. □

Next week: Work in Progress looks at an anti-award for virtue.

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Prudence Farmer Poetry Prize

The Prudence Farmer Prize of £100 is awarded annually for the best poem, in the judge's opinion, to have appeared in the New Statesman *during the previous 12 months. This year's judge was poet PAUL MULDOON, who has chosen Michael Hofmann's 'A Minute's Silence', published in our issue of 8 November 1985 and here reprinted*

AFTER READING through the 46 poems that appeared in the *New Statesman* between July 1985 and July 1986 and settling on the winner (a dreadful notion, but there you have it), I turned to the judges' comments on the last ten years of the Prudence Farmer Prize. These had been kindly supplied to show how other poor fools had discharged their responsibilities.

There was James Fenton's finely-timed laser surgery on the 'Martian' eye (1978). There was Derek Mahon's Star Wars-ish, laser-gun attack on everything that moves, extra-terrestial or otherwise: 'most of the poems published during the past twelve months seem to me pretty terrible' (1985). More surprising, though, was this from Michael Hofmann: '[Paul Muldoon's] 'Yggdrasill' was really the outstanding poem of the year; charismatic and puzzling, a hallucination of language, an outrageous clarity of tone married to a severely impenetrable darkness of subject . . .' Hold on, I said to myself, it looks as if I won this in 1984 and nobody bothered to tell me. My hopes, albeit retrospective, were dashed: '. . . but, in the end, I felt I couldn't give a prize to something that eluded me quite so much.' Fair enough, but why mention it in the first place? I asked myself this somewhat mutedly since I suspected I'd soon be getting into just as much a muddle as old Michael.

As you might deduce from the above, I don't read the *New Statesman* regularly. I do read it *irregularly* though and have occasionally come across a poem that has sent a shiver down my spine. It's a feeling I often had from the *Listener* in the late Sixties and early Seventies (when Karl Miller was there); I remember distinctly some of the 'Crow' poems by Hughes, Heaney's 'Bogland', Fenton's 'The Fruit-Grower in War-time'. I had the same feeling when I read Fiona Pitt-Kethley's 'Goat Show' in these pages about 18 months ago. I almost wrote her a fan letter. I seem to remember something from a column she wrote in the *London Review of Books* about her having had a bit of bother with male fans, so perhaps it's just as well I didn't. Had 'Goat Show' (collected in *Sky Ray Lolly*, Chatto) appeared within the period under consideration, I would have awarded it 'Reserve Best, a category that's seldom found in life': the poem's about the vagaries of prize-givings — 'almost every goat/has a rosette — red, blue or green.'

The three Pitt-Kethley poems that *do* fall within the allotted span — 'Red Fish' (12 July '85), 'Evolution' (6 December '85) and 'Dildoes' (28 March '86) — also happen to fall within that smutty schoolgirl/'man-killing parish' she seems somehow to have annexed. The 'ice-white Chilly Willy lollies' in 'Red Fish' are from the same furry corner of the freezer as the Sky Ray lolly itself: 'that Martian's willy'. I'm afraid that this particular flavour of the month is not to my taste. Because I'm male, do I hear someone say? I think not. 'Why mention it in the first place?' I hear Hofmann exhale, relaxing.

What *should* I mention? There's Felicity Napier's 'Natasha Says' (21 March '86) with its new urban fairy tale of a woman being jilted by a man, given a certain time by which to leave their apartment and, just before going out the door, picking up the telephone:

> Then she dialled; listened to the New York
> Speaking Clock
> and gently laid the receiver on the duvet.

The thought of the ensuing telephone bill is immeasurably more terrifying to the male than Fiona Pitt-Kethley's worst harangues. Or there's Fleur Adcock's 'Last Song' (20/27 December '85) in which she waves

> Goodbye
> to one-a-side for breasts and balls and shoulder-
> blades
> and hands; goodbye to the straight line
> drawn down the central spine,
> making us double in a world
> where oddness is acceptable only
> under the sea, for the lop-sided lobster,
> the wonky oyster, the creepily rotated
> flatfish with both eyes over one gill.

So far, so good. But Adcock ends with a high-sounding prognostication for 'the next world': 'If the flounder still exists it will be king.'

More persuasive is Vicki Feaver's reworking of Brancusi's 'The Kiss' (also from the Christmas '85 double-issue):

> The lovers are stuck
> lip to lip
> eyeball to eyeball
> until the end of time.
>
> The sculptor has given them
> what they wanted
> in their first ecstasy:
> never to be apart.
> But the guard
> who patrols at night
> swears he has heard
> raised voices in the stone.

A minute's silence

(for Michael Heffernan)

Michael Hofmann

A seagull murmur or worse — he kept it quiet,
went at his work, made plans. One of his last,
he produced Hugo von Hofmannsthal's fictional
abdication, the Lord Chandos Letter, for radio:
a droll package of *M*s and *H*s and *F*s and *N*s —

his, and Hofmannsthal's, and mine, the translator's . . .
The studio was round the corner from Broadcasting House,
in a shakier, worse-favoured building,
hollowed under by the Piccadilly and Victoria Lines
drumming through Regent Street. One minute in three

was useless, a minute's silence, to avoid picking up
the awful judder at the heart of the city . . .
A year on, I'm in a new house and he's dead.
Traffic noises, clean slates hammered down —
to hear the banging, you wouldn't give them a price.

I'm sitting coiled over my letter of condolence,
left elbow out, head down, the verbs tramping stiffly
into the furthest corners of mood and tense, closed
conditionals, Latin and peculiar pluperfects,
like Hofmannsthal's . . . 'I had had no idea.'

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In the light of that, I'm glad I *did* write Vicki Feaver my one and only fan letter — on the strength of a poem in a magazine. Eat your heart out, Fiona. Stay with us, Michael.

Past winners of the Prudence Farmer Prize were well represented this year. We had Carol Rumens' 'Winter Borscht' with 'The uneatable sundae casting turd-like shadows' (24 January '86). We had John Levett's 'Old Holborn' (19 July '85): 'With pinks and flags the cityscape's/Perimeters are trim,/But certainties, like heavy men/Make chances seem so slim . . .' And we have Matthew Sweeney's 'The Mugging' (18 October '85) which begins, 'That night I was mugged twice in a dream/on Leather Lane and Gray's Inn Road/ annulling my late night poker earnings.' Sorry to be a bore, but are we to take it that the speaker *had* a dream 'on Leather Lane and Gray's Inn Road'? Of course not. Is it Leather Lane, or Gray's Inn Road, or both, that annul the 'late night poker earnings'? Of course not. But the syntax is so clumsy that the reader is forced into these needless considerations. All the more needless when the major, solving illumination of the poem has the muggers running off and 'The light from the lamppost showed rain/as their steps echoed through empty streets.'

One problem with Matthew Sweeney's poem is that he seems to be aiming for the fragile understatement in which the Poetry Editor of the *New Statesman* himself excels. When this kind of writing is bad, it can be really girl-with-the-curl-in-her-forehead bad, bad, bad. When it's good? Try Alison Stone's 'London Revisited' (20 June '86):

> Three years and back to these
> Same British streets I ran through blasting
> The Ramones. I have
> Earphones now. I shave my legs
> Not my head. I have learned to say
> 'Please' and 'Sir'.
> I pass the fountain I dived into
> After dancing 'til six.
> Men with briefcases stared
> As I rang out
> My skirt on the subway platform.

I love that 'rang' instead of 'wrung'. I think that poem has the immediacy, certainly less bogusly, of 'In the Station of the Metro'.

The Underground also looms large in 'A Minute's Silence'. Michael Hofmann's poem has a special poignancy for me in that Michael Heffernan, for whom it was written, worked with me for BBC Northern Ireland in the mid-Seventies. Although he had a heart condition, he was quite the most spirited person I've ever come across. I should also say that I wrote a longish poem about his tragic death almost exactly a year ago. Not that any of this background information is necessary to a reading of Michael Hofmann's poem, nor, I've persuaded myself, have I allowed that background to influence my judgment. 'A Minute's Silence' is self-evidently warm, witty and worldly-wise. Not only is it 'the outstanding poem of the year' published in the *New Statesman* but it's won the Prudence Farmer Prize as well. □

Paul Muldoon has recently edited The Faber Book of Contemporary Irish Poetry.

FICTION

Left behind

Nigel Fountain

News from Nowhere
DAVID CAUTE *Hamish Hamilton* £10.95

DID YOU HAVE a good war? Since the old buffers with the pink gins have finally all answered each other, the noun should now be changed. Delete war, add 'Sixties', and we have a question for the times.

If asked of Richard Stern, the subject and occasional narrator — through various and sometimes mystifying stylistic devices — of David Caute's novel, the arrogant bastard might well reply with an imprecation, or just a contemptuous glance from that long, saturnine face. Tactfully change the subject to the Seventies and Stern might comment on his experiences in Rhodesia during the guerrilla war; try and keep off the women's movement, it would only lead to unpleasantness. As for the Eighties, well Stern's 40 now and has buried broken hopes in the interstices of the BBC World Service, 40 years on from Orwell.

It is Stern who points out that, while George reserved his contempt for 'bearded fruit juice drinkers', he sees their successors as 'anoraked health food women' stomping through the mud of peace camps, discussing equality working parties and excluding him from their women-only world, inconveniently located in *his* old flat.

The Stern of 18 years ago is an LSE lecturer, apprentice to sorcerer Harry Marquis, an academic of the first New Left. Stern is a scourge of conservative academia, acquaintance of Bertie Russell, on first Maitre terms with Sartre, member of a bizarre branch of the International Marxist Group — the IMG may have been odd, but it wasn't *that* odd — and layer of an archetypal male idea of a golden fuck from that out-of-synch fin de siècle.

But the extreme cannot hold. Marquis' spells stop working, the dream woman swaps suede skirts for a basin haircut and Stern, obsessed by a white Zimbabwean woman waging war for Mugabe, transfers locale and changes career. He re-emerges as a radical journalist in the Rhodesia of the doomed white tribe, tantalised by his obsession and taken for a ride up and down the Limpopo.

David Caute: back to the Sixties

When he touches down in Salisbury my irritation with Stern began to abate. Sadly, whenever he returns to London it would renew, as he becomes what William Morris in his rather more optimistic *News From Nowhere* described as a member of that 'peculiar class of parasites who call themselves cultivated people'. On the familiar terrain of this city, in the last 15 years, the author is curiously out of touch; Stern is my contemporary, his perceptions are of another place, another time, the late Fifties.

Back in the land of Ian Smith, Caute's own experience feeds into — or, at least, enriches — the narrative. Yet, as his central character remarks, 'fiction might be the way out of the impasse between philosophy and journalism'. It might be; but Stern's drunk at the time he says it and I wasn't.

Infuriating women, racist thugs, bombastic academics, sardonic Americans, opportunist Africans, raddled journalists . . . Caute delivers the characters, sometimes brilliantly — as with his portrayal of a tortured Fleet Street hack — but leads them, well, nowhere. And this time round it isn't News. □

FICTION

Hall of mirrors

Alison Hennegan

Prisons of Glass
ELIZABETH WILSON *Methuen* £9.95

IN HER AMBITIOUS first novel Elizabeth Wilson explores, through the lives of her mainly female characters, the relations between women who made contemporary British feminism and the women it made. If those past tenses seem curious, as indeed they are, I use them partly because a muted note of threnody runs through the book: there is a strong sense that something is over. Time and again characters retreat from feminism: into uneasy compromises between it and professional demands; into leftist politics which make no real acknowledgement of feminism's truth; into closet marriage; into the smaller, tighter, closed world of domestic struggles and allegiances. 'Post-feminism' is a self-evidently ridiculous word and one the author uses only ironically: when her characters use it, they do so with an unconvincing, would-be irony, seemingly employed to pre-empt the criticism they expect from others and (sometimes) level at themselves.

Moving, though not chronologically, from the mid-Forties to the present, Elizabeth Wilson recreates vividly the conditions which prompted the feminist upsurge of the Seventies and the political battles which raged

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Elizabeth Wilson: forward from the Seventies

over the issues which have seemed, at different times and to different women, the most important — though rarely at all times, to all women. One of feminism's most painfully learned and easily forgotten lessons has been that there are feminisms (rather than Feminism) to meet the innumerable needs of women (rather than Woman). When Eileen, passionate Communist, prepares to forgive the Party which has suspended her, when 'Willow Tempest' (née Cathie Robbins) goes to live among the Californian Redwoods, when Crystal wonders if *this* non-sexist man might be the real thing, *I* call it retreat, but possibly it's the only advance available. Or is that just another example of the spineless, wishy-washy liberalism that got us into this mess in the first place?

To the elucidation of that and other mysteries, Elizabeth Wilson brings clarity, wit and elegance. The book might have been a predictable list of issues — abortion, monogamy, pornography, transsexualism, lesbianism, Peace — addressed during a whistle-stop tour of cultural landmarks — Hippiedom, the Pill, campus revolt, Baader-Meinhoff, Greenham. The issues and landmarks are there all right, but contained within a carefully controlled narrative which is pithy, compassionate and playful. She excels in enjoyably horrible and immediately recognisable descriptions and analyses: of Sixties authoritarianism masquerading as anarchism; of the nasty, nasty games that politicos, feminist ones too, play in manipulating meetings and emotions; of the agonisingly protracted internal monologues about what a good feminist *ought* to do, followed shortly by what she does.

Wilson as author plays her own, much nicer, games. Constant shifts in tone, tense and narrative voice, from first person to third and back again, or moving from one character to another before we've realised it, disconcert and remind us how grovellingly dependent we are — in living as in reading — on knowing who's 'really' telling a story, whose truth to believe. Preconceptions, based on prejudice, are identified and overturned: as when we realise, far too late, that a very young woman's unpleasantly arrogant lover is no chauvinist male but a baby dyke who needs her bottom smacked. Punning titles preface chapters which then turn upon the double meaning that the puns convey — the verbal ambiguities emphasising the eternal difficulty of seeing and hearing aright.

How to remain open to new truths without sinking into a morass of moral relativism is one of the book's central concerns. Its title's many possible meanings resonate throughout: minds, emotions and hope are as easily imprisoned as bodies; glass protects, reflects, distorts, divides, allows us to see (but not pass) through it. Elizabeth Wilson's ability to combine factual historical detail and personal symbolism so that each constantly serves the other results in a novel filled with pleasures of an unexpected kind. □

FICTION

Twilight zone

Jeanette Winterson

The Old Devils
KINGSLEY AMIS *Hutchinson* £9.95

THAT OVER-SCRUTINISED species, the middle class, is at it again in Amis' new novel about getting old. The women are at each others' throats and the men are round at each others' houses, or in the pub, getting drunk. That's roughly the division of occupation we've come to expect from Amis, but this novel is more than a rehash of his favourite tunes gone grey: it's a thoughtful if unsuccessful attempt to penetrate the uncertain years beyond middle age.

When Alun Weaver, well known writer and retired rake, returns to South Wales with his wife Rhiannon, his old pals are excited and cross, torn between a wish for their daily nothingness to continue and a deeper need for something to happen. The resulting jealousies, squabbles and self-examinations would not be centre stage for younger people, but here Amis is deadly accurate in his perception of the shrinking world that can follow retirement, a world where 'all of a sudden the evening starts after breakfast'.

The drawback is Alun himself, whose dyed white hair is the most surprising thing about him. There's no correlation between his presence and the effect he appears to have on others. If this were not the elastic world of fiction, where the author can manipulate cause and effect, Alun would be about as diverting as an ice cream.

Not so Rhiannon, who shares with her

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bowel-conscious old flame Malcolm a touching reality. Amis doesn't usually write well about women: as with so many painters of the female nude, his creations are recognisably women, but not women we can recognise. So, in the case of Rhiannon, who looks set to escape her pre-destined characteristics, it's especially disappointing that Amis doesn't quite dare to break his mould. Had she been allowed to carry the novel instead of Alun, there'd have been less time for the obsessive 'all boys together' dialogue that undercuts the story's uncomfortable insights and fragile tenderness. The rest of the women aren't worth mentioning.

The men are, as usual, henpecked and consumed with guilt and hopelessness. Two of them are very fat. Amis does a good line in making the aging body a foreign land, a place where the stomach has long eclipsed any view of the feet, while the colon has a mind of its own. It's impossible not to feel sympathy, but only as an outsider. The comedy has a distancing rather than an engaging effect, perhaps because Amis is afraid of slurring into sentiment, perhaps because the same fear that gags his women forces his men into compulsive banter. He never lets loose an emotion that can't be scotched with a quick line. Almost never. The last sentence speaks of a book that might have been if Malcolm and Rhiannon hadn't been badly squashed by the clashing rocks of jokiness and control. □

FICTION

Deep sea diver

Alison Fell

Sea Swell
CECILIE LØVEID trans. NADIA CHRISTENSEN
Quartet £7.95

IF CECILIE LØVEID prefaces her novel with a quote from *To the Lighthouse* — 'When life sank down for a moment, the range of experience seemed limitless' — it's because she intends to cast us loose from time, action and characterisation conventions and take us diving into the underneathstreams of realism. What we find down there is the imagery of a woman dislocated and all the feints and false starts of a consciousness trying — not always willingly — to cope with separation and adulthood. Using prose and poetry laced with journalistic crossheads, Løveid juggles foreground and background, flattening conventional perspective and showing the context and ripples around an action more often than the action itself; her treatment of time, too, is as cavalier as the unconscious.

There is a plot of sorts. Kersti, a young Norwegian woman, has been abandoned by her married lover and, earlier, by her father; Monika, her artist friend, salves and supports her. In contrast to Kersti's darkness, the father appears glistening, a mythical pirate, rapacious and adorable. Matt, the lover, is similarly enigmatic and bewitching, even if he does torture Kersti with absences and obsessive phone calls to his wife.

Cecilie Løveid: down to the soul

Løveid is fully in command of her character's weaknesses here, comparing her, in her capacity for blinding herself, to the reindeer in Norwegian cave paintings: 'Does the reindeer have an eye? No, the reindeer never has eyes. It musn't see its hunter!' Later, however, when Matt in Kersti's absence draws a lipstick picture of her body on the bathroom mirror, Kersti speculates wryly on her role as mirror-wife and on the risky business of 'playing ancient music on modern instruments'. 'When it comes to love,' she decides, 'I'm as stupid as a sheep.'

Often Løveid's prose poetry is stunning, absolutely the best vehicle for catching major and minor earthquakes of the soul: for instance, in a fine passage where Kersti, expecting Matt to tell her terrifyingly that the affair is over, tarries on the veranda feeling a row of wooden clogs with her bare foot; or, again, when she talks to her bicycle, telling it she's pregnant. But at other times, particularly on forays into childhood, the imagery is so dense and traumatised that I suspected that the author and her character were lost in a hopeless tousle and sinking and that I was going down with them. I struggled on not only because of the usual feminist lust to see what happens to the modern woman (i.e. *does she save herself?*) but also because Løveid's commitment to new territories of language and form is simply so exhilarating. □

FICTION

Wheels within wheels

Nick Kimberley

Selected Works
KONRAD BAYER trans. & ed. MALCOM GREEN *Atlas, 10 Park Street, London SE1* £5.50

KONRAD BAYER was an Austrian writer who, in 1964, killed himself; he was 32 years old. That despairing end to his life contrasts with the optimism of his decision, years earlier, to give up his job in a bank and, using his winnings at roulette to support him, become a poet. The roulette wheel might be an emblem for his writing; its combination of rigid rules and chance results parallels the tension in Bayer's work between language on the one hand as precision instrument and, on the other, as arbitrary structure. This selection of poetry and prose pieces shows that tension at work.

It was language's arbitrariness which held the greatest appeal; in the Fifties Bayer was a member of the Vienna Group which, according to Malcolm Green's introduction to this volume, published a 'flagellomechanic manifesto produced by a typewriter flailed by lead balls attached to cords'. It would be easy to see that manifesto as a desperate gesture prefiguring the death of the author. But Bayer was by no means a writer of despair. He saw 'poetry as popular sport' and all his work could be interpreted as an attempt to take writing beyond traditional (European) hierarchies.

One of the longer pieces here is 'idiot'; its second section is called 'load of shit'. Amongst its assertions are 'art is a load of shit . . . compassion is a load of shit . . . desire is a load of shit'. *Epater la bourgeoisie?* Certainly, but not as nihilistic as it might appear. Without making grandiose claims for the poetic qualities of that writing, it's possible to read such a rant as a positive affirmation of life's fecundity beyond the drab categories understood by Austrian language and culture.

Bayer's work, like that of the whole Vienna Group, was profoundly political. The Group's readings and events were constantly raided by the police who, on at least one occasion, insisted on vetting each piece before it was performed. In the face of such direct intervention, our own ranters might easily wilt.

Bayer fused the anarchic impetus of Surrealism with the intense formalism of concrete poetry. He derived power and inventiveness from self-imposed restraints. The 20 pages of 'the bird sings' (' a poetry machine in 571 components') are based on an elaborate, half alchemical, half mathematical structure which dictates the form of the writing but by no means predicts its results. Other pieces draw on Wittgenstein, while a poem called 'flight' (not translated here, but illustrated) was an endless syllabic spiral presented on a rotating cylinder.

This is of course avant-garde writing and it's the custom these days to sneer at the avant garde's elitism. But Bayer and his associates had no interest in diverting the mainstream of Austrian culture. They wanted to do away with it (although 'bayer's fatherland list' was a tribute to those Austrians he admired: Freud, Mozart, Wittgenstein, Trakl . . .). Not all of his work has retained its power and a *Vienna Group Reader* would be a useful next step. Malcolm Green's introduction does a good job of providing a background to Bayer; he and Atlas Press deserve support for the bravery needed to put out a collection like this. I hope their efforts aren't greeted with the philistinism which Bayer spent so long attempting to dismantle. □

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PAPERBACKS

Violence and sex

Alan Brien

ASKED IF SEX was dirty, Woody Allen reassured his questioner: 'Yes, if you do it right.' There was a lot of sex in *Granta 8* which introduced us, three years ago, to America's 'Dirty Realism'; there's perhaps even more in **Granta 19: More Dirt** (Penguin £3.95). Despite the titles, I can't help feeling the contributors are still doing it wrong.

The sex here is undeniably dirty; what it isn't is sexy. What is sexy is the other main ingredient, violence, also usually dirty. Cyril Connolly could have wrapped up, and flushed, the whole package in one parody short story, though to me most of them come across like parodies already. You've read them all, you've read one.

This is not to say that the samples are not vivid, dramatic, memorable, disturbing, shocking even. Much of their American life is lived outdoors, on the porch, on the beach, in the street, by the pool, in the bar. It is difficult to avoid being a Peeping Tom, a voyeur and eavesdropper. But these flashes, caught in silhouette while cruising by, remain sensational shadow-play, spotlit perhaps, but rarely illuminated.

The effects often rely on easy role-reversals: macho-man turned randy house-husband, timid virgin apprenticed as a butcher. The availability of weapons is crucial: armouries of kitchen knives, the super-market pistol, the missile dropped on the patio from the penthouse. The inner life of the characters tends to be surgical, or obstetric, escalating to the mind only in the mental hospital. Given a gift for phrase-making, succinct, laconic, Hemingwayesque, the formula should not be hard to follow. A piece like 'Los Angeles Without a Map' appears neither better nor worse for being written by an Assistant Editor of *Time Out* who is only a 'frequent visitor' to the territory.

Benedict Kiely, an Irish novelist who exhibits the talents and, often, the pre-occupations cornered here by the Amises, father and son, is never reluctant to expose the interesting, or dirty, side of sex. In **Nothing Happens in Carmincross** (Methuen £3.50) the physical is once again just a membrane away from the psychological or the mythological. His long-exiled Irish celebrity-historian, flying home from America to attend a backwoods family wedding, typically finds himself in the VIP-section of the plane servicing a fellow-expatriate with no legs, and an urgent bladder requiring frequent changes of bottle: 'Where, in the name of Christ crucified and the water that flowed from his side, does the piss come from? Is the man simply dissolving?'

The Dirty Realists, actually up-dated Gothic-horror merchants, do not devote much attention to sex as pleasure, as adventure, as fun. Their couplings are either extremely painful or barely noticeable. Kiely, as a true realist, accepts both of those extremes and yet everything in between. Bedding his old girl-friend, now a hotel manager of 50-odd, he observes, 'She is in a pink dressing-gown frilled with écru lace. She is not unlike something large, bland and quivery from the after-dinner trolley. But very comforting . . .'

Nothing Happens in Carmincross is full of such understated felicities decorating the boundaries of love and friendship. Violence too is alive and kicking, but against something, with a history and for a cause. To my taste, Kiely sometimes begins to totter into credulous awe about his land's religions and legendary images. The Celtic mythology has a cardboard humidity that rots the language. But, just as we fear we have lost him, he rides out of the mists from the opposite direction, glowing with irony and scepticism. Few novelists have such a wonderful sense of balance.

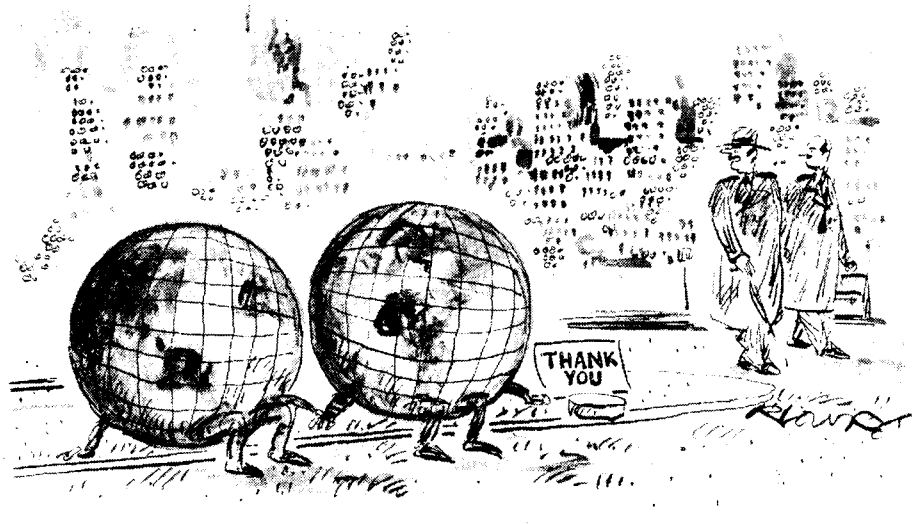
Rachel Ingalls' **Theft** (Faber £2.95) is also from an author who blends everyday exactitude with magical fantasy in a way that transcends the limited boundaries of Dirty Realism. This short novella has a plain, simple surface that turns out to be studded with mirror fragments. The two prisoners, brothers-in-law, whom we meet chatting uneasily through the bars in a riot-torn city seem easily identified. But soon we begin to wonder quite how they differ racially from their jailers; which country or even century they can be in. As it happened, I foresaw the climax in the first few pages, but it did not matter. Those who are held in suspense until the end will, if anything, feel a stronger impulse to start again and try to chart how Ingalls blends all the different strands of time and place.

Christina Stead is a modern novelist (b. 1902-d.1983) whose reputation has grown with every year, doubling and trebling up since her death. Her most famous book is *The Man Who Loved Children*, boosted into best-sellerdom by Randall Jarrell, poet and critic. I myself prefer *Letty Fox — Her Luck*, written 40 years ago but, amazingly, releasing on the world the liberated woman: internally if not externally; in theory if not in practice; nervous and daring, selfish and guilty, desirable and vulnerable. **The Salzburg Tales** (Virago £4.95), some 40 tales covering 500 pages after the fashion of *The Decameron*, were written with two days for each one. I'm afraid it shows. Though they are full of incidental brilliances, a glittering surface and a seductive atmosphere, I long for the later 'professional realism' she then scorned as grey and over-controlled.

A different kind of realism can be found in Michael Crick's **The March of the Militant** (Faber £4.95). Exploding like a hand grenade in hard-cover in 1984, it is now updated and graded to the status of a time-bomb in paperback. In the end, I found it hard to resist an admiration and envy for an organisation of the Left which shone with such Leninist efficiency. Those of us who have scraped together shillings and pence for the mass party of the workers, the Labour Party, can only marvel that a pressure group claiming few more than 8,000 members can pass from one hand to the other more than £300,000 a year.

Before sounding off for or against Militant, I would urge not only reading Crick's frighteningly detailed study, but also Eric Hobsbawm's **Labouring Men** (Weidenfeld £8.95), a collection of extraordinarily informative essays, in paperback since 1968 but now freshly re-issued. It is not easy to believe that titles like 'Trends in the British Labour Movement since 1850' or 'British Gas-workers 1873-1914' can be such rivetting reading, but he throws a flood of light on, among other things, what went on before Militant.

In the blurb, Asa Briggs praises his 'elegant phraseology'. This is, it seems to me, one talent he has not got, and does not need. What he possesses is far more valuable and rare: an ability to analyse a situation, turning it round while distorting nothing, but showing you how it looked from our, the workers', side. Hobsbawm is not only educational but exhilarating. □



This is serious — that's the world and his wife

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LETTERS

Stuff and nonsense

Andrew Neil, Editor, Sunday Times

I was rather saddened to see the *New Statesman* continue its vendetta against the *Sunday Times*. Nick Faith's article (*NS* 12 Sept.) continues in the same old *Statesman* vein. He is entitled to his views, but surely a responsible journal should not publish stories littered with mistakes.

Nobody called Derek Jackson has ever edited the Magazine. At no time did I ever say 'anyone over 35 carries a yellow star' — that is sheer invention. The story about *The Economist* meeting is apocryphal. The circulation figures he gives are wrong, both for the *Observer* and the *Sunday Times*. Frank Giles did not retire when I took over. Yes, the paper has moved right on some issues since I took over, but our editorials have consistently opposed monetarism and called for a higher PSBR — hardly 'absolute Thatcherism'. Look at last week's Business News and see if it is 'almost exclusively a tip sheet'. And so on, and so on.

Why print such nonsense?

Ian Jack, London N5

Both your headline writer and Nicholas Faith seem very taken with a brilliant old adage about the Evans/Thomson *Sunday Times*. Faith writes that it 'was less an orthodox paper than, in Arnold Wesker's words, "an adventure playground for journalists'." Actually, these weren't Wesker's words but mine, which Wesker quoted anonymously in his book, *Journal into Journalism*. If Faith looks into his copy he'll find that Wesker has attempted to give the full quotation a vaguely Scottish flavour. This is because I said it to the bold Annie Robinson, who threw it around the office gift-wrapped in tartan. That Wesker left out the 'hoots . . . ye ken' shows the subtlety of a considerable dramatist.

Liberal views

Matthew Huntbach, London N4

Roger Liddle (Letters 12 Sept.) shows his ignorance of Liberal principles. The whole point of the Alliance was to demonstrate that two parties could work together while maintaining their separate identities. It is evident that it has failed if such co-operation must inevitably lead to a merger.

Liberalism means encouraging diversity and removing artificial barriers to free thought and discussion. Thus seeking the breakdown of rigid party barriers, and an end to the attitude which regards those of differing political views and allegiances as 'enemies', is an essential part of Liberalism. The introduction of proportional representation ought to be a step towards this, but to Roger Liddle it means only a move from a rigid two-party to a rigid three-party system.

The idea of 'Alliance' should extend beyond members of one political party co-operating with members of another, towards co-operation with those outside political parties in community and pressure groups. In this way it links up with the Liberal principle of community politics. To Roger Liddle and other social democratic bureaucrats in both Alliance parties it means only the suppression of all that dares to be different into the grey mish-mash of the so-called 'Partnership for Progress' document.

Martin Powell, Treasurer, Liberal CND, Liverpool

Does the *New Statesman* believe that Liberal policy consists of those things that David Steel supports? In your Instant Guide to Defence Policy (*NS* 12 September), you interpret Liberal Party policy as in favour of American cruise missiles. Yet some years back the Liberal Party declared its opposition to cruise missiles. When the missiles arrived a motion was passed by the policy making Party Council calling for them to be sent back. This was reaffirmed at the subsequent Assembly which called for them to be 'removed forthwith'. Just for good measure a subsequent Party Council declared its opposition to sea and air launched cruise missiles, making no distinction between nuclear and conventional warheads.

This is not the only gaffe. It is true that Steel has characterised the difference between the SDP and Liberals on Polaris as 'we will replace Polaris unless peace talks go well' vs 'we won't replace Polaris unless peace talks go badly' but the Liberal Party has never supported the replacement of Polaris and the debate on Polaris at the 1984 Assembly was between those who wanted to scrap it immediately and those who wanted to include it in negotiations. The assumption was that even if the negotiations failed Polaris would not be replaced.

Ian Flintoff

It is not surprising that Roger Fox, a founding father of the Social Democrats Mark I back in the 1970s, attempts the sanguine view of the SDP Mark II, and its leader. (Letters 29 August).

Loyally he praises the most refined pyramidic structure on the political landscape: the SDP since Roy, Bill and Shirley dropped from sight. Now the desire to be conspicuous is the only coherent thread running through SDP policy and behaviour. It is often little more than an agency providing commentators to the press and broadcasting, from breakfast to *Newsnight*, on the words and deeds of politicians with real parties behind them.

Thus in Devonport — a proper centre for concern one might have thought — the small print of government legislation for the privatisation of Dockyard management is left to the critical eye of Lord Denning, although defence implications are considerable, as is the threat to local jobs.

Meanwhile, recently, a hasty trip to France and West Germany is arranged, in order to make some kind of sense of a long-standing proposal for a future European nuclear defence strategy. A matter of days before their conferences start, it is the desperate act of men desperate with the need to fog the minds of their supporters.

Certainly it is not the serious stuff of substantial or lasting politics. It is cosmetic and improvised. As in the past, such gaudy impromptus have the knack of entertaining the public for a while but, in time and invariably, the act loses its fascination and the electorate returns to the more serious question of the country's future.

'Post-Ptolemaic' discussions

Giles Radice, Shadow spokesman on Education

Andrew Lumsden and Denis Campbell have written an interesting article on sex education (*NS* 12 Sept.) but they are wrong about the motive which led the Labour Front Bench team to table an amendment at the Report Stage of the Education Bill to allow parents to withdraw their children from sex education classes.

As the Bill stands, it includes an unsatisfactory and potentially restrictive clause on sexual education added in the House of Lords. As I argued at Committee Stage, we believe that sex education should be part of the school curriculum but we do not think that politicians should attempt to prescribe how it should be taught. Rather we want 'good practice' to evolve as a result of consultation and discussion involving teachers and parents.

Our aim in tabling the opt-out amendment was to put pressure on the government to delete the unsatisfactory sex education clause altogether. Thus, far from being an effort to head off a feared moral backlash it was an attempt to remove from the bill a clause that is likely to restrict rather than support sex education.

However, when, following Labour's victory on corporal punishment in July, we succeeded in delaying the Education Bill until October, Labour's Front Bench team decided to consult teachers, parents, children's organisations and local education authority representatives about the issue. The main conclusion which has emerged from the consultations is that the sex education clause should be deleted. In addition, those we consulted believe that parental opt-out would be both impracticable and prejudicial to effective sex education.

I shall therefore be seeking a meeting with the Secretary of State for Education to urge him to drop the sex education clause and we shall continue to oppose it in the Commons. I shall also be withdrawing the opt-out amendment and shall be advising my Parliamentary colleagues not to support the Bruinvels amendment.

NUJ should look to its members

Chris Reekie, Secretary, Edinburgh and District Branch NUJ

Clifford Longley (*NS* 12 Sept.) is mistaken in attacking the structure of the NUJ. There is nothing wrong with the NUJ's structure. What is wrong is the indifference and apathy shown by

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most of the membership.

It is nonsense to suggest that because *The Times* Chapel has a quorum of 30, it should not be subordinate to Farringdon Branch, which has a quorum of 10. This is like saying that millions of people in Britain should not be represented by 650 MPs or that millions of Americans should not be represented by one President.

Branches deal with wider issues and have the important task of handling election of new members and subscriptions — administrative jobs which are vital to the NUJ's survival. Members have it in their own hands to raise issues and table motions. If they choose not to do so and stay away, is this the fault of the NUJ's structure?

Furthermore, all NUJ members cannot be in Chapels. Many members work in isolation in public relations, magazines, books, and other sectors, and therefore have only the Branch to go to.

The NUJ has discussed its structure a number of times in recent years. The Union was re-organised in the mid-'70s and in the early '80s a Structure Working Party was set up. However, the SWP was disbanded in 1982 because of lack of interest from the membership generally. The NUJ's rules are revised every five years at the outside and can be altered in any year if urgency can be shown. A new rule book was issued this year.

I don't believe the NUJ's structure is 'a Trotskyist militant's idea of heaven'. You can have any structure you like, but it is the members who make the decisions.

A definition of pornography

Rachael Chazan, Jerusalem

Rosalind Coward, in her rich and fascinating article on feminism and pornography (*NS* 13 June), gets into a thicket of unanswerable questions. To disentangle this, it might be useful to distinguish between two kinds of feminism: (1) The view that women's rights are to be defended, if need be, at the expense of men's rights; (2) The view that there ought to be equal status and equal rights for both sexes.

In line with the latter view, which is the one I adopt, sexual relations acceptable to feminists are those in which one partner respects the other as a person, an equal though different. They exclude those in which the other is a mere object or a means to an end. One might call them ethical or egalitarian sexual relations. This, incidentally, corresponds to most psychoanalysts' definition of normal versus deviant sex. It is irrelevant whether someone is 'turned on' by the kind of sex in which one partner becomes dehumanised into an object of satisfaction, be it man or woman, oppressor or victim or spectator who is so stimulated. The literature and pictography which serves this kind of sex is definable as pornography.

Proposal for Peter?

Diana Eden, London SW17

I confess that until I read Peter Anhelides's revelatory letter (*NS* 12 Sept.) I had never seen my three-week stint of telly reviewing as an avenue to media-stardom. However, this notion will greatly cheer, especially during my bi-monthly sojourn in the Tooting dole queue. I feel that Peter Anhelides and I should discuss all this more fully — preferably on honeymoon . . .

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TUES 23 SEPT

MARK HOLLINGSWORTH on 'The Press and Political Dissent' (Pluto), at the Old Coffee House, Beak Street, London W1, at 8pm.

FRI 26 SEPT

SECOND CONFERENCE on Realism in the Human Sciences. Speakers include: Roy Bhaskar, Sue Clegg and Michael Rustin, at the University of Strathclyde, Glasgow. FRI 26-SUN 28. Cost £6. Details from Steven Sharples, Department of Architecture, University of Strathclyde, Glasgow.

SUN 28 SEPT

REUNION OF RATIONALISTS at 3.00pm in the Library at Conway Hall, 25 Red Lion Square, WC1.

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THURS 2 OCT

INVOLVING THE COMMUNITY — The Lessons We Can Learn. A workshop for all interested in increasing public control and involvement in services. Speakers: Suzy Croft and Peter Beresford. Venue, Advance, 14 Bloomsbury Square, London WC1A 2LP, 2-5pm. Details: 01-223 7989.

SAT 11 OCT

ROSA LUXEMBURG & KARL LIEBKNECHT: Revolution, Remembrance, Representation. Seminar 12 noon with May Stevens, John A. Walker and others, at the Pentonville Gallery, 4 Whitfield Street, London W1. Exhibition continues through 22 Nov. Free admission. Enqs 01-482 2948.

SOCIAL ASPECTS OF AIDS. A conference for all interested in social dimensions of HIV infections and AIDS. Speakers: Keith Alcorn, Tony Coxon, Julian Meldrum, Ken Plummer, Hugh Robertson, Simon Watney, Kaye Wellings, Tony Whitehead, Tony Vass. Venue: Bristol Polytechnic 10am-6pm. Details: 0272 741251 (Peter Aggleton or Hilary Homans).

THE SOCIALIST SOCIETY

BOOK OF THE MONTH SEMINARS
at the Old Coffee House, Beak Street, London W1, all at 8p.m.

TUES. 23 SEPT.
Mark Hollingsworth on *The Press and Political Dissent* (Pluto).

FRI. 3 OCT.
Leo Panitch, author of *Working Class Politics in Crisis* (Verso), on 'Socialism after Blackpool'.

TUES. 21 OCT.
Peter Dews, author of *Autonomy and Solidarity* (Verso) on 'Habermas and the Marxist Tradition'.

TUES. 18 NOV.
Michelle Barratt, Anne Phillips and Lorna Weir (Toronto), authors of *The Politics of Diversity*, on 'Feminism, Marxism, Nationalism'.

TUES. 2 DEC.
Cora Caplan, author of *Sea Changes* (Verso) on 'Cultural Politics and Feminism'.

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FOOD

Made up dishes

Colin Spencer

GOOD COOKING is often innovative. The talented cooks I know decide on the dishes they will make from the ingredients that are on sale that day. If the artichokes are plump and green with no brown edges to their outside leaves; if the broad beans are young and small and need no inner peeling; if the spinach has plenty of spring in it; if the herrings look bright-eyed and smell stridently of the sea: this is how the best meals are put together.

They also have to be balanced. With these ingredients, it would be an error to stuff the artichokes with the puréed beans and then stuff the herrings with the puréed spinach, though both dishes are excellent in themselves. I would be inclined to gut and scale the fish, split them, line both sides with spinach leaves, place some chopped onion in the centre, roll up the fish and bake it in a spiced sweetish wine. Then chill it and have it cold with a potato salad. This is making a new recipe out of the food at hand.

Two recent examples spring to mind. A baker near me makes a loaf shaped like a cylinder with a mushroom head. Fresh, the loaf can be used for circular sandwiches which have a particular charm. However, on this occasion, the loaf was two days old and its shape looked perfect for stuffing. I sliced the mushroom top off and gouged out the interior leaving about half an inch all round. I chopped a lot of herbs — parsley, mint, basil and lovage — and mixed them with four beaten eggs. I made some garlic butter and painted the interior of the loaf with it, then poured in the egg and herb mixture. I covered the loaf in foil and baked it for half an hour in a hot oven.

When I unwrapped it, I discovered that the stuffing had shrunk by a third. An unexpected factor, for the bread had soaked up the eggs leaving the herbs at the centre. The dish yielded three portions instead of four but it looked good on the plate, a perfect centre circle of green herb wedged into a larger circle of crisp garlic and egg bread. But I confess I was most proud of the sauce I made with it. I had a portion of very ripe Brie at its peak. I knew there was little chance of us having room to eat it at lunch and the Brie would quickly decline if it wasn't eaten. So I made it into a sauce. This is a simple ploy and tastes stunning. Mash say about 6oz (170g) of ripe Brie after cutting off any hard rind; if the rind is soft and will mash easily, then leave it. Add about 5 fl.oz (140ml) of a dry white wine and plenty of freshly ground black pepper. Go on stirring and beating with a fork until the sauce is smooth. (As I had some pink peppercorns, I added those too to give the sauce a little colour and texture. The pinkness was a pleasant visual stimulation with the dark green of the herbs.)

The other example of innovation occurred a few weeks ago, when I was in Gozo, part of the Maltese archipelago where the vegetables and fish are generally magnificent. Only, this time, in August, at temperatures near 100°, the fish was bought up by the restaurants and the only vegetables on sale were aubergines, tomatoes and peppers.

One night I made a kind of vegetable moussaka: the aubergine sliced and salted then well drained, fried in olive oil and garlic and half of it placed at the bottom of a shallow oven dish; the tomatoes skinned and coarsely chopped and the peppers cored, seeded and sliced, then both cooked with plenty of fresh basil for a moment or two in olive oil to make a thick, chunky sauce. More aubergine slices were placed over the sauce and, over that, sliced, partially boiled potato, then a thick cheese sauce made from low-fat local cheeses and some mozzarella from Italy. The dish was baked in a hot oven for half an hour. It was enjoyed especially by the young, but we had about a quarter of it left over and this I made into a soufflé. I used four eggs, separated, mashed the left-overs thoroughly, mixed them with the egg yolks, folded in the stiffened egg whites and baked the souffle for 20 minutes so that the top was crisp and brown while the centre was runny. This was consumed with gusto and I was astonished at how good such a scratch dish was. The combination of a tomato sauce mingled with a cheese sauce may look a bit like raspberry ripple but, my God, it sings on the palate, while having the slight crunch of potato and aubergine helped the texture of the soufflé.

It continues to reassure me that cookery books exist, a rough guide and a stimulus, but only experimenting with new combinations of flavours gives you the real enjoyment in eating.

Innovation comes into its own when you rush back home after a busy and exhausting day, too tired to do much but throw a few things together and pray that it won't taste too disgusting. Actually, most of us do do a little better than that and, with a bit of experience, what you throw into the pan or wok can often be astonishingly good. The old standby of something on toast edges onto the gourmet level when you add chopped, ripe avocado and stir it into the scrambled eggs. The eggs go well, too, with tinned, smoked oysters and always marvellously with a bunch of freshly chopped herbs or just basil alone (very roughly chopped), this being a small miracle of taste sensation in itself.

This year I have grown yellow courgettes and yellow tomatoes. The latter are very sweet, the former not much different in flavour from the green. They look highly appealing mixed with the green variety, together with the red of the tomatoes. You can now buy both in the market and you will find the excellent Sushi pickled ginger in wholefood shops. The following meal would take only a few minutes to prepare, is excellent nutritionally and tastes good. The amounts are for two.

Stir Fried Courgettes with Noodles

1½lb (680g) yellow and green courgettes, trimmed and sliced thinly
2 red peppers, cored, seeded and sliced
4 cloves garlic, thinly sliced
½ packet Sushi pickled ginger
2 tablespoon sesame oil
2 tablespoon dry sherry
½oz (15g) flaked almonds, toasted
1lb (455g) wholewheat noodles

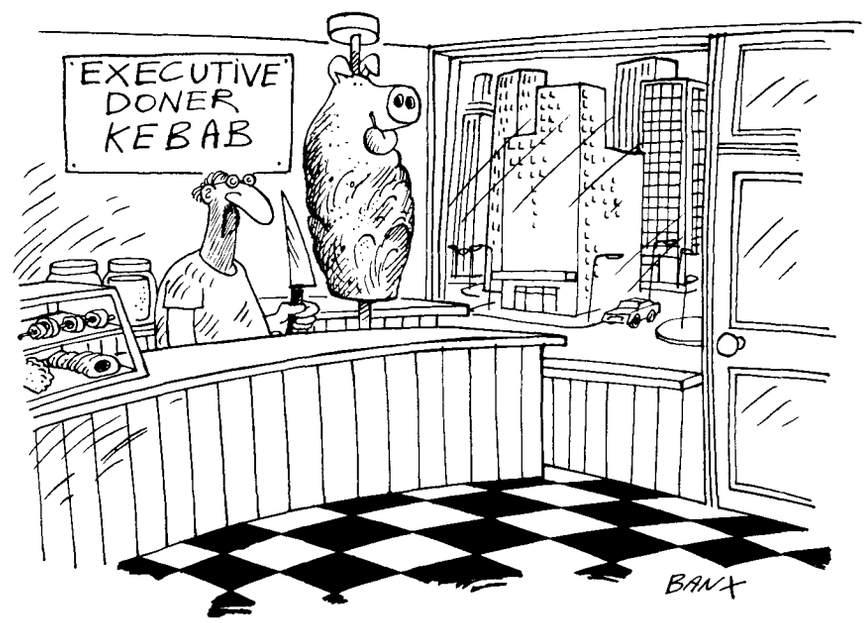
Bring a pan of salted water to the boil, throw in the noodles and bring back to the boil. Cover and take away from heat. Leave to stand for 5 minutes.

Meanwhile, light the oven so that it is warm. Tip the almonds onto an oven dish and put in the oven to get brown and crisp.

Place the wok over the heat, pour in the sesame oil. Add the garlic, peppers and courgettes and stir fry for two minutes. Add the pickled ginger and stir fry for another minute.

Drain the noodles, tip out onto a platter, cover with the stir fried vegetables and sprinkle with the almonds. □

Colin Spencer's Fish Cookbook *(Pan) and* One-course Feasts *(Conran/Octopus) will both be published on 2 October.*



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Underground culture

Marek Kohn

LIKE ARCHAEOLOGY, the London Underground is a metaphor for memory. And you don't have to go as far as comparing the earth with the maternal body to appreciate that being inside it, recovering layers of lost experience, might serve as a comforting substitute for recapturing the first embryonic sensations of all. Burying anything automatically surrounds it with the stuff of ages. Buried things are interesting.

In the Metropolis they are of particular interest to Tube Nuts. Every so often, London Underground bows to pressure from its devotees and lets them into King William Street Station. The last trains left for Stockwell in 1900 but, for the enthusiast, it is Tunnel Heaven. Standing in an iron-ribbed burrow under the bed of the Thames, listening to the rumble of boats passing overhead, the biped moles can only wonder about the other, forbidden Underground: from the folktales of secret escape routes to the Home Counties for officials in wartime, to the demonically-possessed station of *Quatermass and the Pit*, the Underground tunnels are a vault for the imagination. All the more pity, then, that the painfully obtrusive refurbishment of the system is such a patchy shadow of what the Underground might be.

There's Baker Street, of course. Purists might carp at the repro materials that inevitably look a little insipid compared to the Victorian originals, but the point is that the restored Metropolitan and Circle platforms at least invite the passenger to imagine the world's oldest underground railway as it was when it stood proudly at the forefront of technology.

The Underground is a simple concept, hailing as it does from those primaeval days when entrepreneurial engineering could gouge its way through the Fleet Valley slums without fear of effective opposition. The powers behind the later Tube lines include the freebooting Charles Yerkes, who moved into London transport when reaction to his Chicago business practices began to catch up with him. His London monuments are the oxblood tiles and round arches of the standard Tube station design.

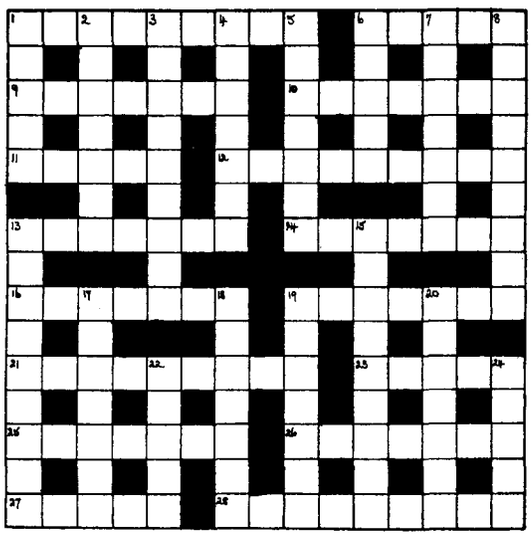
Yerkes brought a certain degree of design standardisation to his railroads and the process was developed by the visionary Frank Pick into one of the first and most illustrious examples of corporate identity. The Pick era was the most truly metropolitan one: the age of the massive city unified by central planning and efficient modern public transport. Now that the system is long overdue for refurbishing, it finds itself in a period obsessed with cash expediency, a high PR profile and something called 'style'. Tomorrow's diversified, post-modern, new-look Underground veers wildly between the excellent and the abominable.

At Paddington, the heavy arches of the Bakerloo tunnels are emphasised in a dignified and calming dark green. The tile motif in the lobby between the platforms has a proper central focus which combines the theme of tunnels with a memorial to Brunel, the genius of the terminus upstairs. The colours relieve the claustrophobia and tension that is an inevitable part of subterranean transit — though migraine sufferers lulled into a false sense of security by Paddington emerge to see something horribly familiar if they alight into the agitating zigzags of the Oxford Circus mosaic.

Piccadilly Circus at platform level is shaping up well. The listed central ticket hall will be retained, too, says the *London Underground Fact Sheet* a trifle sniffily — as though the Tube authorities would love to cover it in murals of Beefeaters and Punks. They might contemplate some earlier tunnel visions, instead of permitting atrocities like those committed at Leicester Square. Charles Holden wanted to provide a replacement for the lost original Nash Circus by creating a new one underground. The Travertine marble, the bronze and the red scagliola are still there, not that anyone would notice. Piccadilly's squalid decline into a vice and tourist trap was a sort of symbol of inner city crisis. Its restoration as the hub of the West End would have symbolic, functional and conservation value.

Weekend Crossword 1532

PRIZE: £10 Book Token for the first correct solution opened. Entries to Crossword 1532, New Statesman, 14-16 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU by first post 7 October.



Name_____

Address_____

_____

ACROSS

1. Railway advertisements? (9)
6. Heavenly body for me in bed (5)
9. It sounds like a heavy fall for one who seeks something precious (7)
10. He turns out to be the one who wins in the end (7)
11. Language used in translating (5)
12. Cause havoc for god and country (9)
13. Seaside town as held by the party (7)
14. Hide an island behind unending waters (7)
16. Hull photograph showing Dickens character (7)
19. Kind of oil which would give speed in a vehicle if nothing were missing (7)
21. Instrument I encountered when going in to change (9)
23. Liberal isle becomes island of inquisition (5)
25. Did the housework and got scorched (7)
26. To follow the fashion I get married without it (7)
27. Farm which makes part of bank lose capital (5)
28. One of these girls sounds as if she would wed for money (9)

DOWN

1. One learner would be here even if the dog were missing (5)
2. Express admiration for those with fewer curves (7)
3. Boy child at the piano needs a chair (9)
4. Inventor a long way ahead of his time (7)
5. Features of the harvest welcome among girls (7)
6. Food counters (5)
7. Gas can provide men with heat (7)
8. Soldier chops up great tree (9)
13. An entertainer can depart after his turn (9)
15. Arriving without the favourite taking part in the race (9)
17. Get off although involved in trade (7)
18. Place which makes the crazy give up climbing (7)
19. Conveyor of goods or ills (7)
20. Bag used by seniors entering college (7)
22. Town for a parade (5)
24. Appears to take notice of what is written (5)

SETSQUARE

Solution to 1530

Prizewinner to 1530

Kenneth Edinborough
(Colchester)

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Soon the prototypes for the next century's trains will venture onto the Central Line. These are the first rolling stock to differ radically in design from the fleets introduced in 1938. Those cars worked through the system's finest wartime hour and on until the last red trains were withdrawn from the Bakerloo last autumn. They were magical vehicles from another age: full of deep greens and reds, woodwork and fluted lampshades, instead of livid yellow formica and fluorescent tubes. A handful of survivors will be rolling again to make up stock shortages on the Northern Line while new trains are built. They should be kept carrying passengers, in the same way as the Underground's static heritage should be preserved in use, instead of being relegated to mysterious after-hours duties like cleaning asbestos out of the tunnels. They should remain as a mobile tribute to a golden age of urban design and to remind the designers of the new liveries that Tube trains will not work properly unless they are red.

About a year ago, I wandered into the courtyard of the disused Down Street Station. A middle-aged man emerged from a doorway. He walked straight past me, reciting the 23rd Psalm in a threatening manner (no mean feat) and disappeared through another door down into the underworld. There are mysteries underground yet. Would it be too much to hope that Frank Pick sleeps there still, awaiting the moment to awake and clear up the meretricious disorder permitted by the functionaries who have succeeded him? □

Weekend competition

No 2942 **Set by John Digby**

Imagine that the inimitable Wogan had some of history's real giants — Marx, Elizabeth I, you decide — to deal with, what would he make of them and they of him? Max 150 words of dialogue by 2 October, please.

No 2939 **Set by Ben Trovato**

Front-page stories from *New Agenda*, the organ of the Thatcher Youth, on the lines of that which recently announced that the Earl of Stockton should be tried for war crimes.

Report **By Ms de Meaner**

Before we get round to this week's entries (and get round to them we shall) I should like to dispel the extraordinary canard perpetuated by Red Dorn (for reasons which I intend to discover upon that bolshevik youth's return from a fort'night in Bognor Regis): namely, that I have been away on a visit to North Korea. As he knows very well, North *Carolina* is whence I have just, with exceeding reluctance, returned to this den of incompetents: a place, I grant, whose politics must make us sigh with impatience, but whose mint juleps leave those of South East Asia a long way behind.

And a long way behind is where your *New Agenda*-style revelations come: for lack of serious competition, I've even had to include an entry which is an article *about* an article (not what was asked for, K. Norman). Six pounds only per head to the winners and, next time you're as sloppy as this, heads are what I shall have.

HOME NOT-SO-SWEET HOME!

Try this simple test. Which politician has, *in common with Tony Benn*: a) dished his party at the polls; b) taken pride in narrowly losing an election; c) distanced himself from Maggie Thatcher and d) disinherited his loved ones by renouncing a peerage?

You don't need to be smart to spot the answer: Alec. The man next to Chamberlain at Munich. *As Benn would have been, all smiles.*

1964. The 13th, unluckiest year, and he challenges Wilson. Isn't it plain that his pacifistic, socialistic leanings led him to foul up the campaign? *If Wilson cancelled* Steptoe, *why didn't Home get* Mrs Dale's Diary *off the air*?

A foreign secretary code-named 'Home'? What more evidence would you require of a Commie? Try this. The day he ditched us, Brezhnev ditched Kruschev and China exploded an A-bomb. And, when you've spotted the red thread in the Douglas tartan, ask yourself who appointed him leader.

The Queen.

WILL BELLENGER

GUILTY! HE SUCCEEDED WHERE HITLER FAILED

The whole responsibility for the loss of the British Empire and the subsequent disastrous decline in British power and prestige can now be revealed. All must be laid at the door of Winston Churchill. He it was who appointed Red International Brigade Attlee as second-in-command in his war-time government. He it was who gave power to commie traitors Ernest Bevin and Stafford Cripps. He it was who, thereby, let the Labourite snakes in the grass in at the 1945 election to destroy the greatest Empire the world had ever seen.

Every time some tinpot bolshie 'Commonwealth' dictator — black, brown or merely pinko — rubbishes our Prime Minister, we should remember who was to blame. Winston Churchill should be *persona non grata* to all Conservatives, nay to all true Brits everywhere — he was always a closet Liberal, anyway.

MAY DAY

It's now clear that Benjamin Disraeli, Queen Victoria's favourite Prime Minister, was a crypto-communist, in secret cahoots with Marx and Engels. Before he took up politics Disraeli wrote a romantic best-seller, *Sybil, or The Two Nations*, the 'two nations' being the rich and the poor. The title itself warns that this is a *roman à thèse*, a novel calculated to foment social unrest and set class against class.

Even more convincing evidence of Dizzy's collusion with his fellow reds is seen in the timing of publication. *Sybil* came out in 1845. The previous year Engels had published his *Condition of the Working Classes in England*. Three years later, Marx published the famous *Communist Manifesto*. The overall strategy behind the appearance of this bizarre trilogy is obvious. Disraeli's *Sybil* was the come-on — the tasty bit of skirt in what would otherwise have been an impossibly dry sociological sandwich.

STANLEY J. SHARPLESS

HEATH: SHOCK REVELATIONS

Ex-Premier Edward Heath was saying nothing last night about allegations that his famous tan was artificial, owing everything to the make-up bottle and nothing to the yachtsman's exposure to wind and weather.

According to a student magazine being avidly pored over by Tory Conference delegates yesterday, the 'Sailor Ted' image was completely bogus and the figure glimpsed on *Morning Cloud* a lookalike stand-in, while the real Heath toured the country with his swing orchestra, relying for disguise on the contrast between Edward's 'tan' and bandsman Ted's pallor.

More damaging than the neglect of parliamentary duties this moonlighting implies is the picture that emerges from fellow-musicians' accounts of bus journeys between one-night-stands spent dreaming up insane, megalomaniac schemes for shifting every county boundary throughout Britain — schemes he later set about implementing, as residents of Humberside, Cumbria and other such regions know to their cost.

KEITH NORMAN

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Take me to your Leader
BY JOHN MINNION
MAY I HAVE A FEW WORDS, LORD MELTDOWN?
BY ALL MEANS
THE REST OF THE UNIVERSE WERE WONDERING WHY YOU PERSIST WITH NUCLEAR POWER. IT'S NOT EVEN ECONOMICAL...
IT WOULD BE ECONOMICAL IF WE DIDN'T WASTE MONEY ON SAFETY AND PUBLIC REASSURANCE
SO YOUR MAIN PROBLEM IS PEOPLE
I SEE YOU UNDER-STAND
WE ARE WORKING ON REDUCING THIS PROBLEM. THE RUSSIANS HAVE MADE GREAT STRIDES RECENTLY...
52

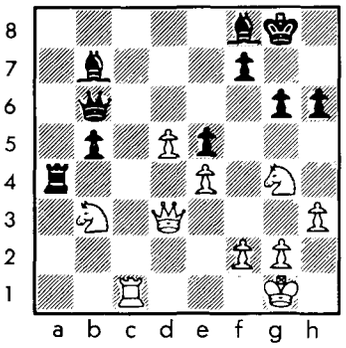
Chess

KARPOV'S LOSS in game 14 meant that Kasparov only needed 4 points from the last 10 games to confirm his tenure of the world title. There is a suspicion that it was something of a one-lemon game, the whole result hinging on a single serious error by Karpov. This is how it went:

Kasparov-Karpov, Leningrad, 8 September. Ruy Lopez.
1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Bb5 a6 4. Ba4 Nf6 5. 0-0 Be7 6. Re1 b5 7. Bb3 d6 8. c3 0-0 9. h3 Bb7 10. d4 Re8 11. Nbd2 Bf8 12. a4 h6 13. Bc2 exd4 14. cxd4 Nb4 15. Bb1 c5 (*a*) 16. d5 Nd7 17. Ra3 c4!? (*b*) 18. axb5 axb5 19. Nd4 Rxa3 (*c*) 20. bxa3 Nd3 21. Bxd3 cxd3 22. Bb2 (*d*) Qa5 23. Nf5 Ne5 (*e*) 24. Bxe5 dxe5 25. Nb3 Qb6 26. Qxd3 Ra8 27. Rc1 g6 28. Ne3 Bxa3 29. Ra1 Ra4 30. Ng4 Bf8 31. Rc1

There are a number of difficult questions about the play so far, in particular: (*a*) The transformation to a Benoni-type pawn-structure never seems to work very well against the Lopez, and here the Bb7 becomes a notably bad piece. Perhaps Black might investigate the positional pawn sacrifice 15 . . . d5!? 16. e5 Ne4 17. Nxe4 dxe4 18. Bxe4 Bxe4 19. Rxe4 Qd5. (*b*)When played by anyone but Karpov such a move is condemned as anti-positional because it abandons the important d4 square. Is this an exception? (*c*) What scared Karpov off 19 . . . Qb6 and 20 . . . Nc5, which would surely be the consistent sequel to his 17th? (*d*) There must be some reason why this is stronger than the valuable asset of a protected passed d-pawn. He was threatening 24. Nxh6+ gxh6 25. Qg4+ and 26. Qxd7, but isn't 23 . . . g6 adequate? If then 24. Re3, the Nf5 is taboo (24 . . . gxf5? 25. Rg3+ Kh7 26. Qh5), but 24 . . . Nc5 looks fine for Black.

Anyway, here we are in a position in which one would prefer to be White because of the strength of the d-pawn. But Black does have the two bishops, which could become dangerous if he could activate the Bb7.



Karpov now played **31 . . . Qd6?**, the lemon in the question, which allowed Kasparov to liquidate to a winning endgame: **32. Nc5! Rc4 33. Rxc4 bxc4 34. Nxb7 cxd3 35. Nxd6 Bxd6 36. Kf1 Kg7 37. f3 f5 38. Nf2 d2 39. Ke2 Bb4 40. Nd3 Bc3**. Kasparov sealed **41. Nc5** and Karpov resigned the following day without resuming play. After rounding up the d2 pawn with Nb3xd2 it is too easy for White.

But could Kasparov have won if Karpov had played 31 . . . Bg7 instead? It is not obvious how White makes progress, e.g 32. Nc5 Rd4 or 32. Rc5 Rb4. Perhaps Karpov feared 32. d6 with the point that after 32 . . . Bxe4 33. Rc8+ Kh7 34. Qd2 Black has to surrender a piece to stop the d-pawn (34 . . . Bf5 35. d7 Bxd7 36. Qxd7 etc). Yet after 32. d6 Ra8 the position is complicated and unclear.

At home the weekend of 7-9 September was the debut of a major new event, the British Isles Open Championship in Swansea. With generous support from the local council and a spacious venue in the Swansea Leisure Centre (site of next year's British Championship) this tournament promises to be an important addition to the British circuit. Important this time to the tune of £1,500 for first and £1,000 for second place. With such events it is just about possible to make a living as a professional player here — provided you keep on winning. That is a tough condition when, among others, GMs Speelman, Chandler, Kudrin and Plaskett were competing for the prizes. Those who left Swansea with something to show for 6 rounds of intense effort in the Open were: 1-2=. Murray Chandler and Chris Baker 5½; 3. Sergei Kudrin (USA) 5; 4-8. Dudrueew (Belgium), Basman, Kosten, Plaskett, Pritchett and Speelman 4½.

The surprise success was Chris Baker, who scored with rousing victories over Regan and Watson. The discovery of the summer, 14-year-old Michael Adams, was also playing in Swansea. Everyone is convinced that he is a GM in the making, but this was one of the rougher passages of his apprenticeship, with two early defeats. My abiding memory of the tournament will be the look of horror on the face of the Dutch player Sikkel, as he contemplated the board in front of him in the final round. He had started in approved style with 1. e4, 2. d4 and 3. Nc3, in reply to which Basman had been playing, with unblushing confidence, 1 . . . h5, 2 . . . g6 and 3 . . . d6! The psychological assessment was apparent to all the onlookers. Basman's h-pawn soon romped down to h3, there to participate in a decisive attack.

George Botterill

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This England

£3 Book Tokens for entries printed (On postcards please.)

☐ Following a recent television programme about nuclear horrors, the duty officer at BBC TV Centre received an inquiry from a woman asking whether cat flaps could be fitted to nuclear fall-out shelters. — *Daily Mirror* (Craig Voller)

☐ A pensioner has left almost his entire estate to the Russian Government. Bachelor Ernest Kelly (81) of Blackfield,who died in June, left just under £55,000. He also left the contents of his garage to his brother, Sidney. — *The Dundee Courier* (Ken Crichton)

☐ Some of the horses pulling landaus along the prom at Great Yarmouth are to get experimental nappies to prevent them leaving a pungent trail which offends townsfolk and holidaymakers. — *Daily Telegraph* (Wendy Abbot)

☐ Football supporters planning a replay of last month's pitched battle between rival fans on a cross-channel crossing will be catered for in a £40 million passenger ship due to be launched on the Clyde complete with its own cells.—*Daily Telegraph* (G. M. Moger)

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A better health service is at the heart of Labour's Freedom and Fairness campaign. Labour's newly-published charter for the family health service sets out new ideas for improving choice, service and treatment at the frontline of healthcare. The charter costs £1 (plus 20p postage) from Labour Party Sales, 150 Walworth Road, London SE17 1JT. Also available: Health for All, Labour's charter on preventative health, £1.

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